JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

FREDERICK NIVEN

Albion College
Library

WITHDRAWN
FROM
ALBION COLLEGE LIBRARY

Albion, Michigan

TR
6027
.I.85J
1924x

199869

STOCKWELL-MUDD LIBRARIES
PR6027.I85J8 1924x
Justice of the peace
3 5044 00242 7273

-50

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

FREDERICK NIVEN

With Introductions by
HUGH WALPOLE AND CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
PUBLISHERS :: :: NEW YORK

Copyright, 1923, by
BONI AND LIVERIGHT, INC.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

First Printing, November, 1924
Second Printing, January, 1924
Third Printing, March, 1924

PR
6027
.I 85 J8
1924x

199869

To L. M. N.

DEAR L. M. N.,

You know the fascinating difficulties that I have had with this book. How to give a family history (such a family history as that of the Moirs) without making it as long as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was a difficult question. As well as condensation there had to be suggestion. To give every link of the story day by day, would be, if not impossible, improbable! Stevenson has told us that "Art is the art of leaving out," and I feel, believe, consider, that there is a vast deal of truth in the phrase. But there was the other trouble: my canvas might be, as artists say, "spotty." That would be bad. Again—I felt a danger of making some parts seem niggling in comparison with others, if these others were to be done in bold broad splashes! Not that I think a novel should be all of one texture, or fabric even; the passages in a book so varied as a novel should be varied also—from silk to wincey. (I choose this simile because of the occupation of Ebenezer Moir.) But this borders upon talk of technique—which is for the critic, not for the creator until he has writ his last book, and sits down to talk in the evening.

All along in my work I have had nothing to complain of from critics in the press. I have been treated decently. In my case (I am glad to say) mere uncritical insolence, initialed guardianship and omniscience have been trivial—hardly worth mentioning beside the decent and honourable reviews and critiques written in such a way that their words of praise and of dispraise are both valuable

to me. My books have been *read,* clearly, by evidence of the things that have been said of them. And I have noticed that these critics who have, most clearly, in reading my books, understood what I aimed at, were inclined to point out that my weak point seemed to be construction. Reviews that were signed (so that I could have an idea from the critics' names of the scales in which I was weighed), and signed by men I could gain something by listening to, knowing their standards; and reviews, unsigned, that showed (by interior evidence) that the writers were worth heeding, have pretty often touched on that point.

Just as I was trying to teach myself this—which they cautioned me I lacked—*construction,* I must needs allow myself to be drawn into a long family story, to be haunted by it so greatly that I had to allow it to turn into a book, write it down, hearing parts of it told with pity (that better thing than sympathy) by Wilson; gathering other parts, negatively, under the screaming vituperation of Miss Tanner; hearing other fragments from Robarts. Of all the stories I had ever tackled this one offered me the greatest puzzle in—construction. I must not turn my family history into a book as long as the history of a whole long-lived race; that would be too funny—ridiculous. I do not know but what, if I had not to exist as well as live, I would unravel all this book yet once again, and again begin upon it. But there would be no end to that kind of thing. Given in to, it would end in rewriting one book all one's life—and eventually doing even that in the work-house. And however consoling it is to know that there is a work-house, if necessary, I would fain live elsewhere. No critic, no reader of any kindliness will suggest that I should let that inclination overmaster me!

There—it must go to the printer. That is my apology

—special pleading, or plea of extenuating circumstances —for its blemishes. But I know that it is not quite bereft of other qualities. May it find friends. On the forefront are your initials—as of old the knight wore his lady's favour! Yours always,

FREDERICK NIVEN.

PREFACE: I

Among the writers of contemporary English fiction Frederick Niven occupies a quite peculiar place. It must be nearly twenty years ago now that English critics were charmed with the beautiful English and poetry of "The Island Providence." The obvious thing to say at that time on reading that book was rather scornfully "Stevensonian," because there was just then, owing to an excess of zeal on the part of some of Stevenson's friends, a temporary reaction against that splendid writer. But when Niven, a year or two later, appeared with the poetic realism of "A Wilderness of Monkeys," a book all his own and owing nothing to anybody, it seemed that he would, if he lived, occupy a most important place in English letters.

I think I can say without any prejudice either for or against his work that his proper place has not yet been accorded to him either in America or England. There has been, I think, no critic of serious weight in the last few years, with the single and very notable exception of Miss Rebecca West, who has given him fitting consideration. In that perpetual repetition of English novelists' names that has sounded like a chorus of a popular song in the ears of British readers for the last decade, Niven's name has been absent. His books have not been sufficiently reviewed, and I have seen no single article anywhere that takes consideration of his work as a whole. This is the more extraordinary if it be considered how very few Scottish novelists of rank we have. After the

great Sir Walter himself there are Galt and Miss Ferrier, Lockhart—whose "Adam Blair" entitles him to remembrance as a novelist—Stevenson and Barrie, and the author of "The House with the Green Shutters." I would like, too, to put in a plea for the much derided S. R. Crockett, whose "Raiders" is a fine example of macabre romance. The list is indeed small of Scottish novelists, and Niven's contribution is so real and genuine, smells so ripely of the soil, that it is the more astonishing that it has not up to the present been recognized. He has suffered, I am sure, the penalty of all writers who work two different veins. His romantic spirit has led him, for sheer enjoyment and fun of the thing, to a series of cowboy Western romances that are jolly and gay and unimportant. They are better than most cowboy romances, because Niven could not help but be a creator, however hard he tried, but they have had the effect undoubtedly of confusing the critics and blinding them to the merits of the Scottish series. The important books in the series are the following: "Ellen Adair," "Two Generations," "Justice of the Peace," and "A Tale That Is Told," and if to these we add the fascinating "Wilderness of Monkeys" and a romantic eighteenth century tale called "Dead Men's Bells," we have, I think, that part of Niven's work that promises endurance. Of these, the best undoubtedly is "Justice of the Peace."

One must begin by emphasizing that it is a story of atmosphere; as Edinburgh is the protagonist in "Ellen Adair," so is Glasgow in "Justice of the Peace." I believe that there is no other novel in the English language in which Glasgow is so marvellously rendered. The close streets, the smoky air, the sky thick with moving cloud, the tea-shops with their surging customers, the strange mixed whirl of Art and Presbyterianism, the little pictures of Scottish country life, all these things

compose into one beautiful whole. Take this little vignette for instance:

"Strange things were happening in the blent seascape and landscape. This up-river side of the Little Cumbrae went dark, with just a wedge or two of pallid light on it, where a rib of rock protruded. High over head the clouds seemed as if moored; but a scattered flock of lower clouds was amazingly evident against these high and dark ones. Little clouds, little filmy clouds (detached, like dotted rocks going out to sea beyond a headland) scurried before some middle current of air; and they were all lit, as if with internal glory of their own, lit with fine gold. No sun rays were evident, just these small lit clouds, hurrying low across the sky."

But through the atmosphere there move some remarkable human figures, and it is in his conduct of these figures that he proves himself so fine a novelist, because it is the creation of human souls that is the novelist's supreme business, first, last and all the time. These three souls, Mr. Moir, Mrs. Moir, and their son Martin, are Mr. Niven's great achievements. So old and hackneyed that theme of the struggle of the artistic son against narrowly religious parents! So old and hackneyed, and yet what a new thing Mr. Niven here makes of it; how easily there might have been melodrama, that piling up towards some final catastrophe! But no, Mr. Niven's characters slip along exactly as they would in real life, passing from stage to stage of their relationship without any apparent consciousness that they are expected in another fifty pages or so to clash in a thunderous climax. Mrs. Moir is a creation of whom any novelist in the world might be proud, with her thin-lipped austerity, her obstinacy, her pettiness and propagandas. Mr. Niven shows himself the true artist in creating her, because he gives her pathos and even a kind of unexpected sympathy.

Again, there is nothing harder in fiction than the presentation of an artist; their works betray them. But Martin Moir we can believe in, although his death at the end is a trifle contrived. That is the only criticism I have to offer of Mr. Niven's book.

Here is a writer then who matters. It is time that somebody came along and wrote an essay about Mr. Niven's Scottish novels, and if I were a collector of modern editions I would hurry along immediately and secure Firsts of "Ellen Adair," "Two Generations," and "Justice of the Peace."

HUGH WALPOLE.

PREFACE: II

It was in 1917 that William McFee, then on sea service in the Mediterranean, sent me a little shilling copy of *Justice of the Peace*—with positive instruction to return it to him promptly. I did so (it is one of the books that I am sorriest to have returned) and began hounding publishers to discover why this superb novel had never been published in America. Now, ten years after its first appearance, it comes forward again. To write a little prescript for such a book is too honorable an invitation to be declined; yet surely to anyone with half an eye for fine work it speaks best unaided.

What is there in the Scottish blood and climate (one asks oneself) that makes these Norlanders such gnarled and honest writers? So tender a fusion of tender humorous sensibility and clear penetration into human spirits. You will search this book in vain for any touch of consciously pretty writing. It is written as those Clyde men build a ship: honest and thrifty and tough in every detail: you would say, studying parts and corners, that service was the only consideration: and yet, when the whole fabric and effect are conned, how ample a beauty appears. Mr. Niven has taken the oldest and saddest of conflicts for his theme: The tragic struggle between those who understand and those who don't, particularly dreadful when the oppositon is in one household. I wonder if modern fiction offers any more perceptive portrait of the artist temperament? This nobly honest picture of the relations between an artist son and his

parents—the rigorous but fair-minded old cloth-merchant and the jealous, conventional, morbid mother—focuses into an examination of that sour, dull, peevish and prurient selfishness that rots the soul. You may call it, in essence, a Murder Story: the story of the murder of a man's spirit by this wanton jealous selfishness, in the one quarter where it should least be expected and can least be countenanced.

A great, a tragic theme. Those who have listened-in on the radio have heard that queer little wailing whisper that sometimes, when the wave-lengths are not justly attuned, keens underneath the gay music that is tinkling in the head-phones. It is as though the very interstices of the ether are alive with voices of strange sorrow. I have something of the same feeling about this beautiful book: under the honesty and charming vividness of the tale I seem to hear that small, far crying of unknown grievance: the unabolished misunderstandings and maladjustments of the world: the brave human spirit crying out for happiness and finding it not.

Mr. Niven has also that greatest of gifts that can fortify the artist in prose: the sense of place. In this book, as also in his fine *A Tale That Is Told* (a book published here almost simultaneously with Mr. Lewis's *Main Street,* and perhaps by that coincidence not attaining one tithe of its merited attention) he repeatedly gives us a realization of Glasgow that makes scenes we have never visited actual beyond the streets of our daily visit. I hope that painters will read this book, for indeed Mr. Niven sees with the trained pinctive eye—examine, for instance, the underground tea-room in Chapter Four, or the excursion to Millport in Chapter Eleven. Such sharp little mental canvasses remain in the mind; and Sauchiehall Street in Glasgow becomes, even to those who have never and may never see it, a place of precious

reality and precious romance. This is that conviction of the reality of the lives of fellow-men which Conrad has suggested as the topmost achievement of the novelist.

There are many things that might be said about this remarkable book: but it would not be seemly to over-emphasize the occasion. A greater service to Mr. Niven, perhaps, would be to add a word about himself. By quoting from one of his letters it may be set down with his own flavor. He wrote (in 1922):

I was born 44 years ago in Valparaiso, Chili. I was nominally educated at Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow, after a voyage round the Horn in a sailing ship, that I recall with more delight than any of the class rooms. Then as for what I know of art students: I was at the Glasgow School of Art almost every evening of every term for two years. I came west in my teens, and went back to Scotland and wrote about a dozen sketches of western life which were taken at first offer by the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*. *Pall Mall Magazine* saw one of them and asked for a story, and in my excitement I wrote a poor one, which came back. So I put the excitement away and later they had one or two. Then I went into journalism in Scotland as all sorts of things on a big newspaper affair. Assistant story editor, special article writer, and so forth. I used to write some serials on staff and once, writing in the same room with my chief, who was similarly employed, I laid down my pen. "Finished?" he asked. I told him I was almost finished, just thinking out the curtain; and rather thought I would have to have it just at the moment when there was a flash of steel. He groaned and said he thought he wanted that more than I could. We were writing for the same paper and so could not have two flashes of steel curtains. We tossed for it and I won, and

then magnanimously surrendered the flash of steel to him, and he came round to my side of the table and looked at my last paragraphs and thought he really did need it more, and helped me to another curtain. Then I went to London to edit a paper of the same sort, but better, and in my spare time to write essays and poems that appeared in *Nation* and *Daily News,* and to write a novel. When I sold it for . . . O dear! O dear! . . . draw a veil. . . . I left Fleet Street and went down to Devon over Hartland Head. Then I got married and told my wife about British Columbia till we both got so that we had to go and look at it. Where the money came from I forget. I know that after we returned to London I once went out with her to see if an article I had sent out to some paper had appeared, and on the way to the news-stand said: "Oh, by the way, have you got the penny?" I think it was on the sale of some serial rights we came to the west. And then we looked forward to selling another and get back again. Now I think we will make the west our home and visit the other way when we sell a serial. But it does not seem so urgently necessary to go to London, as it seems over there to see the long grey rolls of the foothills and raise the Rockies and without any silly tosh smell them. Sage and balsam are great. My grandfather was William Waterston Niven, printer in Glasgow along with his father, and later head librarian of the Glasgow Public Library. I took a spell of that too, loving catalogues as well as books, had two years of it in Glasgow. Before going in for journalism I dipped into the second-hand book life in Edinburgh.

At Irvine, the old town that I picture in *A Tale That Is Told,* my other grandfather was Baptist minister. My father was a sewed-muslin manufacturer in Glasgow, but later went to Valparaiso. My mother was born in

Calcutta, for her father had gone out to India in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society to set up a printing press at Serampore. Print seems to have been in the family on both sides.

I should have said that at the School of Art in Glasgow I learnt a tremendous lot from the chief there who, if he was not a great artist, was a great teacher, Francis H. Newbery. "I am not here to put art into you," he used to say, "but to bring it out if it is there to be brought out." But he is in *Justice of the Peace.* My period was the period just after Lavery and Guthrie, and Harrington Mann, and Walton had ceased to be students and were our idols. I have here a photograph of Harrington Mann on my mantelpiece—souvenir of the ecstatic interests in the visible world of these years, and I feel just the same boy still.

Frederick Niven is remarkable among current novelists for the variety of his bent. *Ellen Adair,* of which I often hear fine things said (Rebecca West has praised it repeatedly and with huge enthusiasm), I have not read; but in sea tales, Western romances, and in my first love, *A Wilderness of Monkeys,* which I discovered at Leary's in Philadelphia ten years ago, I have found him a craftsman who always knows precisely what effect he means to convey, and conveys it. But *Justice of the Peace* will surely stand as a book specially precious, for here he speaks for a character who is not often very explanatory on his own account—the artist-spirit hemmed in and obstructed in the very fountain of his life. He speaks, one believes, with extraordinary understanding. The justest appreciations of this book, I think, should be written by painters rather than by the ordinary reviewers. Mr. Niven himself, who lives happily in British Columbia, riding horseback and smelling bal-

sam and writing occasional charming letters to harassed journalists, is too lucky and too sagacious a man to be greatly perturbed, whatever the critics say. But for my own part, I believe that American readers will perceive the quality of this book. It is encouraging to believe that fiction burning with the true spark of vitality yields not readily to oblivion.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

EBENEZER MOIR was in a preoccupied condition in his Glassford Street warehouse. He sat in his private room. Its window was the middle one of three (near the corner of Wilson Street) that showed green glass half-way up, and ordinary glass beyond—the one on which the name *Moir* appeared in gold letters. The long window north had the word *Ebenezer* upon it; the other one south read *Manufacturer,* and below, in the corner, in small letters—*And in Bradford, Yorks.*

His duties as J.P. seemed to-day more a distraction than an honour; for though, this morning, he did not attend at the Court House round the corner in Hutcheson Street, he still had his duties to fulfil in connection with the office. People kept coming in all the time, sent along to him by clerks at the County Buildings, for his signature, his signature to all manner of papers. Always poor people they seemed to be, poor people whose lives were jig-saw puzzles of misery. He had to do more than affix his signature in most cases; he had to catechise the frowsy callers so as to make certain that they knew what they were doing. It was his way to do so kindly, but this morning all the people seemed to be blatant, stolid, low-browed, big-mouthed, peeping-eyed liars, and beneath his wonted kindliness there was an inclination to be gruff. Not that he sat in judgment on them; but

they disappointed him. One after another glibly dissembled to him, calling him variously—"Sir"—"Your honour!"—"Your riverence!" This latter title, applied by an Irishwoman who had been in some trouble over a banana-barrow, brought a twinkle to his eye. But that was only a transient flicker of amusement in a depressing task.

He might easily have opened his door and called to the office: "If anybody comes I'm not in!" but he didn't. One odoriferous citizen after another was shown in to him, fumbling a scrap of paper, sat down on a chair indicated, and attempted (with a vocabulary of a dozen words) to tell the full story of some woe—or to jockey the Justice of the Peace into being party to some deliberate, bullet-headed injustice to some other party not present. Women carrying babies inside shawls, that they wore over their heads like Spanish mantillas, made his private room mephitic as a neglected area. A hawker with a dirty bit of paper in his claws sat and scratched himself so vigorously that, after he had gone, Ebenezer Moir felt himself itching from head to foot. That he had sympathised with the man's case perhaps only made him itch the worse. The clerk outside smiled at the collection of humanity that wanted to see the J.P. Caird, the cashier, said to Smith, the senior clerk: "If we get any more like that he'll be sending the office boy out for some insect powder!"

These people in trouble, or trying to get other people into trouble, were especially infestive to Ebenezer Moir to-day, for he was on the way to depression over his own affairs as it was. He had tried, for the past year or two, not to believe that business was bad. But it was. He just had to believe it. Among the junior warehousemen in the neighbourhood of Ingram, Glassford, Mitchell, and Miller Streets laughter might continue for some time

yet; but even the department heads showed the faint beginnings of doubt, at times, in their faces—for the observing at least, for those who were "posted." Between the interruptions Mr. Moir had been going through a heap of ledgers and letter-books, and at last he rose and opened the door. They were too much for him.

"Not in!" he shouted.

Someone said "Oh!" in a startled voice, and he saw that Caird was just outside, hand raised as if to knock.

"You want to see me?" he asked.

"If you please, sir."

"Come in—come in."

Caird entered, seeming worried.

"I feel doubtful about speaking, sir," he began. "And yet I should."

"Yes, Caird? Something wrong?"

"I'm afraid of it."

"Not well, Caird? In trouble?"

"No, sir. No. It is very unpleasant, but—er—well—beg your pardon—being defrauded."

"Do speak out, Mr. Caird, and let me know."

"It's got to be done. The business is not what it was——"

"No, by Gad, it's not!" cried Mr. Moir. "But you know *I* know that well enough."

"Bowles, sir——"

"Bowles? What about Bowles? Is he in trouble?"

"It sounds like eaves-dropping, but you must have the facts. I was having a cup of coffee after lunch, the other day, and I heard him arranging with Rainey—the calender people. I gathered that he had been getting a halfpenny a piece, commission, on every twopenny piece, and a penny per piece on every threepenny piece of cloth that he sent out."

Mr. Moir sat down.

"Gad!" he said. "Yes, you were right to bring this to me. Bowles too! Bowles has been with me fifteen years. I've spoken to him about not giving our own calender man more work, and he always tells me that we haven't the facilities. I've let him have his own way a lot in the calendering."

There was a long pause.

"I do not like this sort of thing—like informing, sir. I've been weighing it for a long while, and——"

"Oh! A long while! That puts a different complexion on it," Mr. Moir said abruptly. "I hate peaching—dislike anything like informing myself. I didn't like it at first when you began just now. But," he gave a strained laugh, "now I feel annoyed at you for not letting me know sooner! Oh, that's all right—not greatly annoyed. I only tell you so that you may set your mind at rest about any opinion I may have about your informing, as you call it. After all you're the cashier. You should let me know of these things—without any question."

"Well, sir," Caird replied, "the books forced me to. They decided me. I've just been looking over the calendering accounts. I've never been in the warehouse side, I'm a counting-house man, but I'm interested to see how these things work out. It is amazing how the twopences and threepences mount up when a man sends out a van-load every day."

"I know. Well now—let me see. You have, of course, more proof than having heard them talking it over and arranging it?"

"They weren't arranging it. They had evidently been at it a long while. I don't know about proof of the talk beyond the books——"

"Yes," said Mr. Moir. "I know there's been too much going out, I know that. But I never thought it

was more than Bowles's fancy. He was such a good man that I allowed it. Let me see . . . I'll have a walk round the warehouse and think it over."

He rose. Caird returned to his desk, and Mr. Moir swung into the warehouse, passing through its departments with heavy tread. He visited the Shirtings, Flannelettes, Winceys, nodding to his heads of departments. Some had matters of business to discuss with him, but seeing his manner they knew he was not in talking mood. The head of the Flannelettes, who paid no heed to moods, a rough, honest, broad-talking man, pleasantly vulgar, tried to detain him.

"Oh, later on, later on," said Mr. Moir abruptly.

"All right, sir."

He ascended to "The Looms," as the great attic was called where, on hand-looms, new designs were woven to see how they looked before going farther. He stood listening to the clitter-clatter of the flying shuttles. Very seldom did he mount up there, and the weavers who saw him wondered what brought him so high. He stood behind one of the men watching the shuttle fly to and fro, as if fascinated by it—or perhaps on the verge of saying: "Oh, stop that design! It's no good!" There was a suggestion of rage on his face He was thinking of all the chats he had had with Bowles during the past years, thinking of the friendly terms they had been on—Bowles always, of course, in matters requiring Mr. Moir's final sanction, like a deferring employee; but yet, thought Mr. Moir, they had been able to chat and discuss as man with man. Bowles was a good man, not only in managing in the warehouse, and with "ideas," but for lunching the Canadian and Australian buyers when they arrived. Nominally head of one department, he was actually head of all the warehouse. Though to be found in the Fancy Goods department all day, he was con-

sulted on matters pertaining to all other departments. The other heads often came to him for advice; often he returned with them to their departments to confer there. And this was recognised in his salary.

To lose Bowles would be a knock—a hard knock on top of the knock of knowing him untrue. For Mr. Moir, as he stood in "The Looms" pondering, felt the latter blow the worse. He knew that his cashier would not pretend to have heard that talk. But he wanted more proof. The man in him (and the J.P.) saw this. He could not go ahead in action against Bowles without more actual proof. The books, he knew, if examined, would show a vast deal of calendering—a disproportionate amount. But the books would not show more than that. They would have the bald figures; they would not say: "This is due to a stratagem of Bowles's for making money." The figures might only mean that Bowles had a mania for calendering—for calendering even "stock" goods, as apart from "sales," so as to give the warehouse what he called "a spry appearance." Some shopkeepers have a mania for dusting and cleaning all day. Bowles had given the reason of "a spry appearance" when Mr. Moir once asked him if so much calendering was really essential—also he had told him, long ago, that—without casting any aspersion on their own calender man—better class of goods had to be calendered at a calendering house, they had the trick of it, and the plant. For Shirtings and Flannelettes their own man in the basement was competent, and his plant sufficient; but much had to go out. Yes—it was so. Bowles must not be condemned without thought. Considering thus, Ebenezer Moir descended again to the warehouse. And there he met Rainey—the head of Rainey & Co., Calenderers—entering his warehouse.

"Good *afternoon,* sir—Mr. Moir," said Rainey.

Moir looked in his eyes and saw guilt in them, and fawning. He stopped a moment.

"I want to speak to you, Mr. Rainey," he said, and passed on toward his private room.

"To me? Oh yes, sir. Delighted. Something I can do for you?" and Rainey followed.

"Just come in," said Mr. Moir, thrusting the office door open, passing through, Rainey at his heels.

Caird looked up as they entered the counting-house. He watched Mr. Moir push open the private door. Rainey, following, closed it. There was something in the click of the latch of the door that left an air of suspense in the outer office. Even the clerks, who knew nothing of the Bowles trouble, felt that this was what they called a carpet scene. Carpet scenes were uncommon in Ebenezer Moir's, so uncommon that men of only a few years' service could put their fingers upon no conference in the private room between head and employee worthy of that phrase—"called upon the carpet." The men of longer service occasionally hinted that Ebenezer could be head of the house with a vengeance, if occasion demanded; but they cited no specific example, when chats were on that theme, merely nodded their heads wisely and said: "Old Ebenezer doesn't stand nonsense."

Mr. Moir wheeled round, and even as he wheeled, rapped out quietly and gruffly at Rainey: "How long has it been going on?"

"What been going on?" asked Rainey, opening his eyes wide, and elevating his brows, and looking left and right as if to discover a clue, in the room, to what Mr. Moir meant.

"The halfpenny on the twopenny pieces, and the penny on the threepenny pieces," said Mr. Moir, still speaking very quietly.

"Good Life!" said Rainey. "Well—well, it's done. I suppose, some time, it had to be found out."

"So!" said Mr. Moir. "Yes, it's been found out."

Rainey, reading Mr. Moir's face, judged that his reply had given the absolute conviction, surmised now that Mr. Moir had not been certain of the fact till he heard that reply. Fool that he was! Fool that he was to go into the trap! Well, it was out now.

"Our contract, of course, ends now—to-day."

"Yes," said Rainey thickly.

"That's all. You can go."

Rainey stole out, opening the door only a little way, and making exit like a spider scuttling. The clerks had their noses in their ledgers. Their heads turned ever so slightly, and out of the corners of their eyes they saw Rainey fleeing as a mouse flees when a cat gives it a chance. They kept their noses to their desks—feeling that more was to follow, expecting that Mr. Moir might appear at any moment; and they thought it would be as well, upon this day of atmospheric pressure, to be engrossed on work instead of exchanging hypothetical explanations. Suddenly the door of the private room opened again.

"Tell Mr. Bowles!" came their head's voice. "At once!"

"Yes, sir," said the office boy, and the junior clerk, in hasty duet.

"You go," advised the cashier to the elder clerk.

Mr. Moir heard him bump into the door that led to the warehouse, heard the "puff!" of the air in the silencer as the door slowly closed, caught the sounds of the warehouse—clack of large shears being laid down, dull thump of a "piece" cast on a counter, a voice intoning shades and numbers of warps and wefts, and another responding.

"Mr. Caird!" he called.

Caird came to the door.

"Make me out Mr. Bowles's cheque—to date, and a month in advance."

"Yes, sir," almost in a whisper answered the cashier. He did not like it, now that it had come to a head. It was not pleasant. But surely it had been his duty to tell—though to be sure he would not like to walk out of Glassford Street himself at six o'clock to-night, and know he was out of a job. The voices of newsboys calling the early editions sounded full of melancholy in his ears. He felt much aware of the grey sky that looked down sadly through the clear upper half of window, and he was sorry for Bowles. He hoped Bowles had saved a bit—if only these "knock-downs" on the calendering! Bowles had a wife too; she dressed expensively—he had seen her once. The children were at good schools . . . here was Bowles now! Had he had a premonition already, or did he receive a premonition from the air of suspense in the counting-house? His brows elevated a moment, as if in surprise, then he frowned, and opened the door that led into the private room on his side of the office.

He entered and bowed. It was a very dapper bow. After all Bowles was not such a bad sort. He lived just a little too expensively for his income; his wife dressed rather exuberantly; he liked good wine; they both had leanings toward a dress-circle seat at the theatre. But he had never managed to assure himself that this little "back handing" was nothing at all to speak of. He had often felt very unpleasant about it, and all his assurances to himself did not set his mind at rest. Especially when Mr. Moir treated him in a friendly manner did he have the megrims over that "back handing." The friendliness had made him feel

mean; but instead of deciding to abandon his treachery, he had tried to parry Mr. Moir's friendliness and air of equality by little bows and sir-ings that meant: "You are my employer. It is good of you to be friendly —but still I am not, necessarily, attracted by you." He had, nevertheless, what is called "a sneaking regard" for Mr. Moir. His petty pilferings—which, totalled, were not at all petty—made him feel somewhat menial as he entered the room now.

"*Good* afternoon, sir," he said.

Mr. Moir, still standing at the door that gave entrance to the counting-house on his side of the table, looked over his shoulder.

"Huh!" he thought. "These gushing accents! Rainey gushed at me 'Good *afternoon,* sir.' Bowles gives me '*Good* afternoon, sir.' "

The cashier handed in the cheque and a receipt form.

"What's this?" asked Mr. Moir. "Oh yes—receipt form also. Yes, that's right in the circumstances. Bowles," he shut the door, half turning, "this is your salary to date—and a month in advance, in lieu of notice." He laid the cheque and receipt form on the table, hardly turning—with a side-wise extension of his arm, the way some men tip the boots or porters at the hotel—then looked up to the grey sky through the clear top half of the window, one hand deep in pocket, the other—that had set down the cheque—now fingering his beard.

Bowles cleared his throat once, took up a pen, signed the receipt, pocketed the cheque, looking tremendously grim, then came erect from his bending over the table, and glanced at Mr. Moir who had opened his mouth a moment as if to speak, then closed it. Bowles stood a moment still—looked at his employer again. He felt it

would be—well, the amazing feeling was that it would be *courteous* to apologise, that he should apologise, that he should say: "This is very magnanimous of you, Mr. Moir." As it was he merely licked his lips. Mr. Moir turned, took up the receipt, and opening the door behind him handed it out to the office.

"File," he said.

A hand took it away and he closed the door. Bowles had lost some of his smartness. He looked like a man distressed, sorry, yet aware that this was the end—a very tolerant end too. Mr. Moir sat down heavily in his chair, looked up as if just aware of Bowles, lifted his hand, signed to the door. Bowles turned and went out precipitately. He shut the door quietly; he did so subconsciously, but the reason for that quiet closing of the door was to be found in the sense of pity he felt, not for himself, but—for Mr. Moir.

Left alone, Mr. Moir sat fingering his chin, then shouted: "Caird!" His voice came muffled to the office, and the clerks were uncertain. Had he sneezed? Had he called? They looked at each other in doubt.

"Did he call me?" asked Caird. He was troubled; he hoped the big man was all right. It had not seemed like Mr. Moir's voice, and yet——

"Caird!!"

That was more clear and definite.

"Coming, sir."

"Tell Galbraith!"

"Yes, sir."

Presently Galbraith entered, head of the Dress Goods department.

"Oh, Galbraith," said Mr. Moir.

"Good afternoon, sir."

"Ah, Galbraith."

"Yes, sir?"

"Oh yes—you, Mr. Galbraith. Yes. Would you please take charge to-day in Mr. Bowles's absence?"

"Certainly, sir. He is not taken ill, is he, sir?"

"Ill? No, I don't think so. I——"

"He's just gone out, sir, I saw him. He didn't look well. I wondered when you——"

"Oh, I see. No. No—he's not coming back. He has—er—left my employment. Will you please take charge? If anybody comes in that his men can't attend to—they tell you. We'll discuss the stipend side to-morrow. Oh—I'd better walk out with you to the ware'us'."

He rose heavily. His arm-chair creaked. They went out together, and without a word on the way walked to Bowles's department. The juniors were busy, slightly anxious-looking; they seemed perturbed when Mr. Moir drew near—perturbed and respectful. Bowles had merely gathered his belongings and run, saying nothing to them after his return from the quiet conference.

"Boys! You boys!" said Mr. Moir.

"Yes, sir!"

"Mr. Galbraith will tell you anything you want till further orders. He is filling Mr. Bowles's place."

"Yes, sir."

That was how the day went, and it continued to unfold itself so—all of one piece—"black on grey," as they might say in the Wincey department.

Holes in the pockets in days of affluence may remain unmended, and not a coin be missed; but when trade is bad their discovery brings horror. Being now set a-going—having found one bad hole—Moir was on the search for more. And he found many. One of these would necessitate that he go up to Bradford, and perhaps remain there some days! Somebody might have to lose a situation in Bradford too. All this, and the departure

of Bowles—smartest man on his staff, at least smartest in the presentable and urban way, a man who could lunch vulgarity or breeding and please either guest—made him feel oddly alone. Why should his sons not come to his aid? For their sakes, as well as for his own, it would be wise to have them come into the business soon. John was now at Loretto. How old was he? He must be about eighteen. Martin was at a city Grammar School. He was fifteen. At fifteen Ebenezer Moir had gone to business. . . .

Such combination of business and domestic matters occupied his mind all day, making him unapproachable, and were tangling and worrying in his mind as he went westward along Ingram Street that night to train home. He slackened pace on reaching Buchanan Street, considering the advisability of going up to his club and relaxing there for an hour with pipe and whisky and soda, and perhaps a chat with some quiet member who might communicate his philosophic ease in a corner of the smoking-room. He believed in luring the mind clear away from a vexing subject when it vexed too much, numbing instead of spurring, so as to return to it anon with a swoop and end its vexation with definiteness. No—he would go home and look at his shells over a cigar. His hobby was conchology—and it would not wholly fail him; at the club he might draw blank. The piece might still be the piece of the day—black on grey, and he might find there no philosophic and cheering pessimist with whom to sip a whisky and soda, but be cornered by some argumentative optimist who would irritate him! So he took up again his arrested stride and passed on to the station. The carriage lights seemed poor—all equally poor. He felt the stops boring—Bridge Street (they stopped at Bridge Street in those days), Eglinton Street, Pollokshields, Queen's Park,

Crosshill, Mount Florida—what a rub-a-dub, rub-a-dubbing business it was! Wonderful how they got up speed at all between stations! Clearly Mr. Moir was dismal.

His family saw it. He was dismal and absent despite the glistening table-cloth, and the dexterous maid, and a good cook in the kitchen. He retired to his den to drink his after-dinner coffee, take out his cabinet-drawers, look at his shells—and wonder what on earth he collected them for. Mrs. Moir pottered about the house, worried because he was worried, hurt because he did not give her an account of his worries. She drifted upstairs and looked at the drawing-room fire for a spell, hand on mantelpiece; rearranged some photograph frames; strayed downstairs; looked in at the dining-room, and found that the table had been cleared, and that Martin (the younger son) was at lessons on the hearthrug.

"Don't strain your eyes, Martin," she said.

"It's all right, mother."

Martin was genuinely and earnestly studying, although it was Friday night. He was learning his home-lessons (no small matter in those days) with determination, so that he might have all the morrow for the making of a drawing of Cousin Norah in a big chair, like the frontispiece in a book called *Pen and Ink Drawings,* price one shilling, which he had seen in a colour shop window, and incontinently bought. To pen and ink draftsmen it would be, doubtless as it set out to be, a 'prentice's volume. To a boy who had no one in all his circle of friends who could tell him that these illustrations in the magazines were, in the originals, drawn as large as he saw them when looking through his father's manufacturer's eye-glass, the little book was a mine of good counsel and inspiration. He applied him-

self diligently, on the hearthrug, to algebra. Vain intention! It is not by sitting on the hearthrug, repeating and repeating words to himself, with his heart elsewhere, that anyone can learn the subject of his repetitions. Perhaps that is why so many erudite people can communicate so little, why the knowledge of the Don and the Medallist is so often sterile; why, to the poet, the schoolmaster seems so greatly defeating and dejecting—like a cask with a sealed bung-hole.

It was, truth to tell, even less from idle repetition of phrases that he was recalled, than from a queer dream of many pictures, pictures by Castaigne, by Abbey, by Kenyon Cox, by Blum and Birch (for some old volumes of *The Century Magazine*, containing these, were his main treasure trove), recalled to the hearthrug—and the dining-room—by the maid's "Oh, you are there! Your father wants to see you."

CHAPTER II

MARTIN, entering his father's den, found him standing beside the cabinet of shells; but conchology was no more occupying Mr. Moir here than algebra had been occupying Martin in the dining-room.

"There you are, Martin," he said, and began to talk as if he had been in the middle of some long sequence of thought when Martin entered, and now spoke aloud instead of meditating in silence. "I have men in my warehouse who make mistakes; but I don't lose my temper with them. If they were men who did not make such mistakes they would be running businesses of their own. There's two kinds of men in a warehouse," he withdrew his cigar, and blew a long feather of smoke slowly forth, "the kind that are going to climb through it and pass out, and the kind that are going to be fixtures in it. The fixtures are not much worth, gauged beside the others; but by staying a long time they learn the routine. Of course they have no initiative. But before long a head of a department, or a manager, is perhaps going to be happier than an employer. Well, Martin? Here you are. Sit down—I want to talk to you."

Martin moved toward a seat, rather puzzled, but did not sit down at once.

"Well, business is not what it should be, my boy," began his father. "There's trouble coming for manufacturers in Glasgow. I'm in a quandary, and I've decided to talk to you. Sit down—oh, all right, lean against the mantelpiece if you like—the main thing is

that I want you to feel that I'm not your father who's to be obeyed. I want you to feel that I'm your father, of course," he hastened to say, "but I want you to feel that you are a man, or getting that way," and he beamed on his son, "so you won't just agree with me if disagreement is in your heart." He paused. "Things are not what they should be in Glassford Street," he continued, and held his cigar over the grate for the long end of ash to fall. "I really need help, someone I can trust. Look here, Martin—most boys want to be something. What do you want to be?"

Martin considered whether he should say or not say.

"I think," added Mr. Moir, before his son had spoken, "he would be a queer boy who didn't want to be anything."

"I want to be an artist."

"Oh!" very quick and very definite. "An artist! If you had said anything but that! Gad!—*artist* is out of the question. Man, it's starvation! I should feel criminal if I did not prevent that! Your mother, of course, is entirely opposed to the idea of art"—Martin gave a visible start—"and wanted me to speak forcibly on that head to you if you should mention it. She has an idea that poring over drawings is not just—er—healthy. But I—I, my boy, feel that as a hobby it is excellent. I shall never object to your drawing; but to follow art for a living—no, that you can't do. I should feel criminal. It is like saying: 'I want to go to the workhouse!' It is only exceptional merit, very exceptional merit, that succeeds in art. As one man to another, my boy, I assure you that art, to use an expression I have heard in the ware'us', is a mug's game——"

The picture of Fortuny in one of those old *Century Magazines,* Mariano Fortuny, sitting astride his chair, came into Martin's mind—other pictures of artists also;

and recollections of their work followed. He saw his favourite Sterners and Abbeys in these old magazines; he saw a sketch of Fortuny's studio by Blum; he had never been in a studio, but that drawing seemed promissory, or prophetic for him—he could hardly tell how. He did not consider his father's words calmly. He felt a hatred for the warehouse. He saw a warehouse full of men who called art "a mug's game"—which was not exactly what Mr. Moir had said. Martin's face wore the expression of one baulked; but his muteness made the father repetitive.

"Your mother wants me to forbid you to draw at all—as a waste of time—and points out that you neglect your lessons for drawing. But I can't do that. As a man of the world I know the value of a hobby. If it were not for my conchology . . ." Martin lost the rest. He was like that character in Dickens who could not hear for the indignation ringing the blood into his head. The next he heard was: " . . . yet it would be very nice as a hobby. You could make your little drawings after supper in the evenings. My cashier, I discovered once, paints—after tea at home. He has had some paintings exhibited. I have never seen any, but I have been told. You would have more chance than he, for you are fond of pen and ink drawing, and pencil drawing, and that is not in colour, don't you see? Painting, of course, demands light. I suppose he must do his little paintings on Sunday. He was quite excited once—had to tell me had a picture in the what-you-call-it——"

"Institute?" asked Martin, brightening slightly, though suffering tortures at this terrible future his father suggested. After tea! After supper! The words stirred in him deep down where tears are! They suggested all the day over and nothing done for love of doing it. The prefix *after* was like a wail. The word

afternoon has a sigh of melancholy in it because of that prefix.

"Yes—that's it. Institute, in Sauchiehall Street, I believe. Well, as I say, you could have a better chance with pen and ink drawing for a hobby. That, of course, can be done in artificial light. You see, my boy, it is not so bad—not so bad; you see that, I hope? Now, apart from art—is there anything you wish to be rather than go into the business?"

"No, nothing," said Martin, sepulchral.

"Well, that is pleasing to me. Your mother thought of engineering—electricity she thinks is going to have a big future. But that was only an idea when I said I would not like to force you into manufacturing just because I am a manufacturer. Still—I have a suggestion; I have not mentioned it to her—but it is this: if you went through the ware'us' and became conversant with it all, your art might be *applied.* The only art that is not useless is, of course, as you must see, Applied Art. In fact it is quite a phrase nowadays."

"Yes, I know. Making things, making chairs for tea-rooms, and——"

"Yes—making things, quite so. It is the practical side. A profession without a practice is, of course, the dev—er—bad. This mere *being an artist*—gad! it makes me think of a fellow I knew at school who said he wanted to be a public speaker."

Martin was now paying attention. The loophole of escape, or the ray of light in the warehouse—applied art, but still art—made him listen instead of stare away into distance hopelessly. He laughed now and said: "He didn't know what he wanted to speak about, you mean?"

Mr. Moir, relieved, beamed on his son. Here was a "man to man" talk beginning. Mr. Moir congratu-

lated himself upon managing the talk none so badly after all.

"That's it—just wanted to be a public speaker and hear his voice."

"But that's different! He must have been an ass, father. This is different. He wanted to hear his own voice—but I want to put down the lines of things, the turns of wrists, the turns of a neck, the—the—oh, the slabs of beef on people's faces, and the way the shadows and lights show the shapes, and the wedges of shadow running into——"

He stopped, for his father was staring at him as if looking at him for the first time.

"You are very keen on this, my boy?"

Martin merely nodded several times.

"How does colour take your fancy?" his father asked.

"I've never had a show," he answered. "But I prefer colours best when twilight has come, and everything goes more into tones."

"Why I asked," said Mr. Moir, getting back again, "is because of my idea of your turn for art being still something to you—not just thrust aside because of the precariousness of art. It would give the business an additional interest for you if you went in for designing. It would apply your art tastes and it would be a big thing for me."

Martin pondered this.

"I know a chap at school whose father is a designer of lace and curtains," he said slowly.

"That's the idea. I can see you, some day, in the business. Glasgow is getting an arty touch about it—New Art they call it. That tendency may last for years. You are young, you may catch the note of the time and apply it to soft goods!"

"That chap at school told me his father had some-

thing wrong with him through doubling up over a board drawing designs for curtains all day—formed a sack in his stomach. No, I don't fancy designing." He laughed.

His father smiled, relishing a pawky turn as he esteemed it in his son. So far there had been diplomacy. Now came utter frankness. He was pleased at finding that Martin, despite his prizelessness at school, had been developing none so badly. He liked his manner as he leant against the mantelpiece, one hand in pocket. Thoughtfully he studied him, fingering his chin.

"Look here," he said. "I should like to have you in the business. Hang it all, I'm not so young as I was once either; there's that point of view."

He had no intention of playing on any feelings such as he did play on then, by these words.

"I'll go to the warehouse just as soon as you like!" Martin broke out. "I was only joking about that chap's father. I believe I would like designing." He was hit fair and square by this talk of his father growing old.

"Well, look here, Martin. You've been very frank and open with me to-night. I'll be straight with you. I'm not going to corner you, but tell me straight—do you think it worth while to go on at all at school, I mean even till the end of the term?"

"I don't stand a show of a scholarship, if that's what you mean."

"That wasn't exactly it. And don't think we're so hard up that we could not pay your way through the Ninth and Tenth Standards if there was any sense in going on. But what do you learn? It's little use for after life. If you were winning scholarships and bursaries I should say: 'This boy is cut out for learning.' As it is I think you should go to business."

"There is only one master who is teaching me anything," Martin acknowledged.

Albion College Library

"Oho! And what is that?"

"English literature. He sort of teaches it in pictures, I want to draw it all."

Mr. Moir frowned at the Queer Fellow he had fathered.

"Drawing master teach you nothing?" he asked. "It seem a dam—a funny school where the English master teaches drawing, and the drawing master——"

"Oh, he just bores. He makes us draw patterns instead of each other as I would like to do."

"Patterns? Well now, that seems useful——" and he stopped. His boy's face warned him that he would undo all. It was evident that Martin had little hankering after designing as an alternative to "being an artist." "Is it true that they flog you a lot?" he inquired.

"Yes. Why?"

"A man whose sons are now at Alan Glen's school told me the other day that he had taken them away from your school because they began to be all the while pulling their sleeves over their wrists without knowing what they were doing—all nerves—trying to cover their wrists so as to feel the thwacks less."

"We do—yes, that's so. Several of the boys are always doing that." He looked at his father half doubtfully, but proceeded. "I was flogged yesterday by the drill master."

"Drill master? What's he to do with it?"

"He flogs for the Rector. The teachers punish themselves, but the Rector calls in the drill master—when he's busy."

"Oh! Punishment by proxy! What were you flogged for by the drill master?"

"For bursting a paper bag full of water in the playground."

"For what? Gad! I suppose it rains sometimes in the playground?"

"I never thought of that," said Martin, and laughed. He had not told his father of the incident. It was the kind of thing one doesn't talk about. "One of the boys had filled a paper bag full of water to see if he could boil it over a gas jet. He was going to try at one of the gas jets on the stairs. I biffed the bag."

"And they flogged you for that?"

"Yes—the Rector asked what the water all down the steps was, and when nobody told he said he would have every boy flogged. So I owned up."

"And the drill master flogged you?"

"Yes—he didn't know what he was flogging for. He gave me twenty licks and then I lost count. And then —then I got angry at him. I wasn't afraid of him at all—I mean I didn't think him a big man. I just put my hand behind my back and said: 'Have you been told how many I am to get?' "

Mr. Moir was studying his son's half delicate, half rugged face with interest.

"*Very* good," he said slowly. "And then?"

"He was all white by that time. So was I," Martin interpolated, and laughed a little dry laugh. "He said: 'Hold out your hand, hold out your hand. Don't be rude to me!' "

"Rude to *him!* What did you do?"

"It was in a corner of the Rector's own room. He was sitting at his desk writing, with a quill—he always writes with a quill, and I've seen him pick his teeth with his knife after sharpening the quill. I didn't care. I walked across to him and said: 'Excuse me, sir. Would you please tell this man how often he has to hit me? You just told him to punish me, and he's going on and on. It seems an awful lot for bursting a bag of water.' "

Mr. Moir stood with clenched fists, glaring and listening.

"What then?"

"Oh, he looked up and said: 'Tulloch!'—that's the drill master—'how many have you given this boy?' He didn't know. He was all white and twitchy and jerky. The Rector looked at him as if he were a little bit funky and said: 'That will do! That will do! You can go, boy.'"

"I shall see this damned Rector to-morrow," cried Mr. Moir. "Your schooldays *there* are done. I wish you had mentioned your father to that menial—the drill master."

"We just take it all," said Martin in the perky pride of fifteen. "We're not supposed to funk it."

"All right. I see," said Mr. Moir. "Well, you're not a weakling, my boy. But I see that the rumours I've heard of that school are true. You don't go back at all. Oh! to-morrow is Saturday! All right."

"Left school! Oh, how rippin'!" Martin murmured.

Mr. Moir walked up and down a space, considering the Rector and his liveried flogger. Presently he spoke again.

"There was something else," he began. "There was something else. What was it? That story has—oh yes! Look here, you don't think I'm showing favouritism by leaving John at school instead of recalling him, I hope. You see he's winning some honours, and it seems worth while——"

"Oh, *that's* all right," said magnanimous fifteen.

When Martin—free, free, free, as his thumping heart kept saying to him—left his father's room he stepped on a loose tile in the hall. It gave forth a familiar little click.

"Is that you, Mary?" came his mother's voice from her sitting-room.

"No. It's I, mother."

"Oh, you, Martin. Come in here. Mother's alone."

He entered and found her sitting in a large chair by the fire.

"Come along and sit down," she said. She thrust a hassock into view with her foot. He never seemed to know his mother. He loved her, but did not know her. She seemed very tender, but after his father's "straight dealings" he felt somehow as if she put him back in short trousers again. He sat down on the rug.

"Now," she said, "I'm sure you found your father very good and reasonable."

"He was awfully decent," answered Martin.

"And what is the decision?" and she stroked his hair, looking down on him with her dark and burning eyes that seemed like clots of bright blood.

"I've to go into the warehouse to learn the business," he said.

"I think that's very good—a very wise decision. You are to go after the holidays, I suppose?"

"No, at once. Father is going to the Rector to—to tell him I am not coming back."

"What are you keeping from me, dear?"

"Nothing, mother!"

"Oh yes, you are! Look in your mother's eyes, dear."

He looked up; he felt strange, as if fumbling in some new world, and a little puzzled.

"He was not hard on you over your silly talk about being an artist?" she probed.

"No, not hard. No—he said it was only exceptional merit that—that——" A tear trickled down his cheek. His mother clapped his head and put out her arm to draw him to her, but he gave a blink, a cough, and looked up, smiling. There was no sense in crying. His father made him feel like a man; his mother put him back

again. And to cry in the presence of those who made one cry was a humiliation that at fifteen—nearly sixteen—seemed unmanly.

"That's a brave boy," she said, rising. "It will do you a lot of good to go to business. And you will be a good, unselfish son, and help your father—and apply yourself to learning all about soft goods."

CHAPTER III

All about soft goods? The smell of the soft goods extended round the door on to the pavement, the smell as of jungles of cloth. Mr. Moir swung open the front door, the office door, marched through the office to his private room saying: "Morning!" and Martin followed.

"Good morning, sir," came a quartette of voices.

Slam went the door of the "Private Room," and Ebenezer Moir sat down heavily, turning around in his swivel chair after seating himself, so that it screamed aloud. In the inner warehouse men commented: "Boss arrived!" and those of specially acute hearing added: "Somebody with him."

"Just a minute or two while I look at these letters," he said to Martin, and began to attend to his correspondence, running a keen glance through letter after letter, and laying them before him in piles. When he had finished he leant back, opened his door, and growled: "Tell Watson!"

"Yes, sir," came from outside.

He sat largely humped up before his table and tapped upon it with outspread fingers, tapped a rub-a-dub to fill the pause. There was a knock on the door, it opened, and a lean, vulgar, kindly-looking man entered and said, in a voice at once gruff and hearty: "Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Watson," replied Mr. Moir, and took up one of the piles of letters, handing it to this man—head of the Flannelettes. "I think that's all plain sailing."

Watson looked through the bundle, Mr. Moir tapping out the beats of a vague tune with his feet.

"Yes, sir."

"And—oh, by the way—my son, Mr. Watson. He's coming into the business."

"Glad to meet you," said Watson. "Is this the oldest?" with a puzzled look.

"No—this is Martin."

"Oh yes. Is he to begin in the counting-house?"

"No—warehouse."

"Ah!" and he laughed pleasingly. "Have I to get him to lick into shape?"

"Later on, perhaps, later on. I think we'll start him plain and work him up to colours."

"Well, success to him," and he turned to go. "Shall I tell Archie?" To "tell," in warehouse phraseology, meant to tell whoever was named that Mr. Moir wanted to see him.

"Please."

In a few seconds came a rat-a-tat, and a little, pallid, cadaverous man with a wet moustache jumped into the room, made a dancing bow, clapped his hands together and said: "Morning, sir!" If he had warbled: "Here we are again!" Martin would not have been surprised, only a trifle more amused. Mr. Moir cleared his throat violently.

"There's a bunch of orders for you, Archie," he said. "I see Lewis and Miller are asking when they can get that repeat of navy blue."

"God bless my heart and soul!" snapped the man called Archie. "I spend me days writing to Bradford about that, and me nights dreaming of it. You know what I wud dae if I was you? I'd write a dum'd strong letter to the mills. And that reminds me—I want to know what ye're daein' aboot that yarn from Elder's?

I tell ye, I'm goin' off ma food aboot that. Couldna look at ma supper last night when I got hame. The wife says: 'What's the matter?' and says I: 'It's that dum yarn—Elder is a lazy, plausible, good-for-nothing.' "

"Yes, I'm going to see about it to-day," said Mr. Moir.

"Well, I hope ye will, for I'm off ma food aboot that yarn. Is that all ye have to say? Everything else all right?"

"Yes. That's the lot. This is my son Martin. He's going into the Winceys."

Archie raised a finger and touched his forehead.

"Sir to you, Mr. Martin," he said, with a grin and a nod. "Glad to mak' your acquaintance. All right, Mr. Moir, I'll push along with this little bunch. Dinna forget that yarn. Want to see Beveridge this morning?"

"Yes, you might tell him."

"O. K., sir, O. K.," and off Archie Templeman bounced, slamming the door.

Mr. Moir looked at his son and winked. The door opened, and Archie came in again.

"Ye won't forget!" he said.

"All right, all right."

He departed again, with a furtive yet searching glance at the two.

"Wonder if he saw me wink," said Mr. Moir. "I wouldn't hurt his feelings. He's a queer chap—very good salesman, however. People may laugh at him—but they buy. He's a character. Now and then I have to put him in order. He burst in here once when I had a buyer——"

There came a tap, a gentle tap.

"This is different," said Mr. Moir hurriedly, in a low voice. The tap was repeated. "Come!" he called.

The door opened and a dark man with a frown, and lips held together, a man very much on duty, entered, clicked his heels, bowed a little side-wise bow.

"Good morning, Beveridge," said Mr. Moir.

"Good morning, Mr. Moir," answered the third head of the morning's routine; and then glanced at Martin.

"My son Martin—Mr. Beveridge."

Beveridge bowed and held out his hand half tentatively, and Martin stepped forward, a little nervous. They shook hands. Then Beveridge turned to Mr. Moir and waited, eyeing the letters on the desk.

"He's coming into the business," explained Mr. Moir.

"Oh! Oh indeed! I surmised he was just waiting till you got through—going out somewhere with you." He swung round again. "Well—I hope we shall pull well."

"You'll pull all right," Mr. Moir assured him. "He's just to be treated as if there were no relationship. He's not a boy to expect anything else."

"Quite so. I understand, Mr. Moir." Then to the son: "You'll find it strange at first, of course," said he. "But you'll shake down."

He turned back to discuss his pile of correspondence, for some of these letters necessitated a talk, and one a reference to a letter book. Beveridge made a step to the door.

"Tell the office boy," said Mr. Moir.

Beveridge opened the door, but it was evident from his manner that he had some hesitancy in giving orders to men (or boys) that were not in his own department—employees that perhaps the cashier considered under his own rule. Mr. Moir noticed Beveridge's hesitation, remembered the whimsical ways of his cashier, whom he humoured, and he laughed quietly.

"Get his letter book for Mr. Beveridge," he shouted.

"Yes, sir," from without.

Beveridge liked these little things. He used to tell his girl about them when he called on her in the evening. The book arrived, was inquired into, and at last the Dress Goods duties for the day were fathomed and charted.

"You might tell Charlie on the way back," said Mr. Moir, as Beveridge bowed backwards.

"Yes, sir," answered Beveridge, turned to the door, nodded to Martin, and departed.

There entered next a tall yellow man, with dark hair going grey, large sunken eyes, and the oddest way imaginable of seeming to look peeringly at his interlocutor and yet not to look at him. He seemed to peer at the eyebrows.

"Good morning," said Mr. Moir, handing this gaunt man his letters, and rising. He slapped his son on the shoulder and pushed him toward Charlie MacDougall, saying: "This is Martin. He is coming to your department, Charlie. When you take him out you can send that young man you have just now to me. I'm going to give him a change."

Charlie looked close and intent at Martin's eyebrows, and extended a large rough hand, with which he gave a crushing grasp, what is known in Crown Street as "a hearty grup!"

"He's to be treated just like anybody else," added Mr. Moir.

"Last time I saw you, ma lad," said Charlie, giving Martin's hand the final shake in his vice, and relaxing, "you were in here with your mother. I don't suppose you saw me. I had to come in to see your father and didn't know the good lady was here. You were up there on that window counter, looking out at the lightning."

"I remember," answered Martin. "I remember the lightning."

Mr. Moir looked on with a pleased smile. He thought his son would get on with MacDougall. Martin thought he would get on with everybody.

"Take him with you, Charlie. You go with Mr. MacDougall now, Martin."

So Martin walked out to the warehouse with MacDougall, feeling a stir of the adventurer in his heart. The place was built in well fashion—department rising above department in galleries. One could stand in the well looking up to the glass roof, and hear sounds high and sounds low—pieces of cloth being cast down with dull thud, shears clicking and ripping, voices singing out numbers and names of colours, and others calling a reply. From somewhere unseen a man shouted: "Stand from below!" and a thud followed. Somewhere else a muffled voice bellowed: "Hoist!" and a muffled answer as of one angry, or indignant, followed: "Ye canna hae the hoist the now!"—"Well, damn ye, hurry up," the first voice replied; "I canna stand here all day." A gentle laugh came down from overhead, and someone commented: "Johns is on his high horse!" And "Oh, Johns!" somebody else snorted—and buzz went shears through cloth, and clack went shears laid down.

It was all tremendously interesting to Martin: the way the light poured down the well, the piles—or stacks—of cloth on each floor like pillars that did not quite touch the ceiling, pillars high, pillars low, of all shades; large scissors lying on tables, canisters beside them with string run through holes on top, making lines along counters, pendant lines drooping over the fronts of counters; pattern-books over which men bent, giving dotted colour to the counters too. Boys of his own age, boys younger and older, attracted his attention. He

found them eyeing him as they passed to and fro, cocky kids with swagger—almost all being boys with a tendency towards loud waistcoats and striped shirts. He caught cameraderie in their glances, interest, and belligerence. And it did not take long to know them.

Within a week he was on easy terms with most. Within a week he had learnt a certain swinging walk, a rake of hat, and was proud of being part of the stir of that parallelogram of the city that is bounded by Queen Street on the west, the old High Street on the east, George Square on the north, Argyle Street on the south. He carried a little pair of scissors with flattened ends (so that they would not stick into anything), carried them just showing, peeping out of his waistcoat pocket —and used to walk with one hand in trouser pocket, the jacket held back so as to expose them to any chance scrutiny. They told that he was "in business." His father, thinking the boy had simply jumped into the work of his life, was content and proud; but the mother was not so sure. She had a feeling that one should wait and see. Most of the men and boys were manly enough to treat Martin as he desired—as simply a new hand in the warehouse. Among both juniors and seniors only one or two seemed always to remember that he was a son of the chief. He did his best to nurture forgetfulness of that circumstance, never perhaps to such good purpose as on that occasion when a boy "cheeked" him, and he said: "Perhaps you would like to punch my head now?"

"I would!" replied the boy. "If you weren't the boss's son!"

"Oh, that's all right," said Martin. "I wouldn't tell my father a thing—and *he* wouldn't listen if I did. He's not like that. Come downstairs and I'll knock your face off!"—a pet phrase in the warehouse, most often

spoken in jest, but now, by this youth who had caught it up, voiced as a cry to battle.

Down in the packing-room each gave the other a black eye—and after that things were better. The juniors told the seniors about the encounter, joyful beyond silence. One of the seniors—at any rate—had seen the fist-fight in progress, he having had occasion to come down to the packing-room when it had reached the second or third indefinite round. He had not noticed at first who were the combatants, merely charged into the ring to break it with: "Now then, you young devils!" He kept quiet about having seen the "scrap" until the boys had circulated it broadcast; but that does not mean that he had to keep quiet long, for most of them had the ancient impulse to make a song of such a fight. He verified their jackdaw chatter to the elder men who came to him saying: "I say, what's this about young Martin and Jenkins down in the packing-room? I hear the boys talking about it, and that you separated them."

"Oh, you've heard? It was a scrap sure enough. I sent out for a piece of beef to stick on his eye for him. Jenkins and he shared it. I wonder what his father will say?"

His father said nothing—merely looked at the eye a moment with interest and, in response to Martin's momentary droop of the eyelid, gave a chuckle: "Oh—that's all right. A fight, was it?"

Martin nodded.

"Fair field and no favour?"

"No favour! I thought he wanted to punch me, so I asked him if he did, and told him that my being the boss's son didn't signify."

"Good!"

Mrs. Moir saw it differently in the decidedly well-to-do and—by creed—non-broiling home in Langside. She

asked innumerable questions about the cause of the eye's condition; she said that it was a scandal that boys should fight when they were supposed to be at business; she astonished her husband by proceeding to say that she was sure Martin must have been very rude to get a blow like that——

"Well, well, he gave one back as good," said Mr. Moir at the table head, carving the joint. "Eh?"

"Then," continued Mrs. Moir, "the other boy should be spoken to. Why do you keep so quiet about it?" she asked, looking at Martin again. "You must have said something very rude to him."

"I didn't."

"Oh, but you must have—or else you would tell me."

"It was just a row."

"But you *must* have been bad or you would——"

Mr. Moir set down the carving knife and fork.

"The boy is not a liar," he said indignantly. "He conducted himself splendidly. I expected you to suggest that I should talk to the boy who hit him; I was prepared to have to tell you that that, of course, would be absurd—for Martin, for me, for the warehouse. But I never did expect that you would adopt this attitude, this attitude that he must have been doing something heinous, or that he shouldn't have done, to bring on the trouble. I can't understand you. I can't understand you. Can you not see that he behaved splendidly?"

Mrs. Moir sat erect.

"Mary, will you please pass the bread?" she said.

"Yes'm," and Mary, looking vacant, hastened for the forgotten bread, hoping that she had forgotten nothing else.

For many days Martin could not rid himself of the burden that this attitude of his mother's cast upon him. Not that he attempted to argue against it, either in pro-

test, to her, or in considering it within himself for his own ease. He felt as if she had hit him—and stunned. He had expected that she would make a fuss about the fight—but he had not expected that kind of fuss. Infinitely did he prefer his father's way of not wishing to hear particulars, of only wanting to know (and even that in a kind of casual way—with a "you can tell me or not" air) that the fight had been upon a fair field and with no favours. One result of the "scrap," however, he felt he must keep to himself—from everybody—that was a feeling he experienced the next day when he caught a glimpse of Jenkins in the warehouse, and saw that a blow he had given him on the mouth had taken longer to show than the one on the eye, and was evidently going to show longer. The under lip was all bulgy and tender-looking. He wanted to cry—nearly sixteen, and wanted to cry when he saw that bulging lip! Perhaps his mother would have thought that inclination "unhealthy"—but she never heard of it. It was a tremendous relief to him when, on meeting Jenkins face to face later, that young devil smiled. They hailed each other eagerly with "Hullo!" Eagerly, gaily, they looked over their shoulders each at the other, after having passed, grinning like old friends.

But though all this may sound as if Martin was settling down into the life of a manufacturer, truth to tell he was not. For himself, he imagined that he was. With his hat slightly cocked, with his blunt-ended scissors slightly protruding, with his manufacturer's glass for peering at the cloth (a glass he had, as yet, no occasion to use!), he was really only playing at being a manufacturer. Shortly after that cock-pit incident (down in the concrete-floored packing-room, where the great bale press stood, and the stencils for stenciling the bales hung on nails), Charlie MacDougall found, under an order-

book, a pen-and-ink sketch of Mr. Beveridge. It was unmistakable. He looked at it smiling for some time—then, hearing his assistant coming, he replaced it, and said nothing. He said nothing about that sketch for weeks; but thereafter, when Martin was out on business, or for lunch, he fell into a way of opening blotters, lifting pattern-books that had the appearance of having been tossed lightly into the desk, and invariably there were sketches hid beneath these. When opportunity offered he would show the sketches to the originals, the unwitting models. Martin began to wonder what might be the meaning of the many roguish looks that he received. In soft goods warehouses a deal of "chipping" goes on. Nicknames are coined. Jests are made with a significance comprehensible only to the initiated, like jests of a family—wholly flat to the people next door.

"Ah! Here comes the skitcher!" said Archie one day.

"Skitcher! Skitcher!" Martin wondered. "What is a skitcher?" He premised it was some slang from the neighbourhood of north-easterly Springburn. Archie's vocabulary was racily north-eastern. But, being employed at the moment, he did not pause to inquire into the word's meaning, which would have been obvious had he known of the discovery of his drawings.

Another day the exuberant junior assistant in the Flannelettes, seeing him coming along a corridor, ran round the corner and crouched there, so that Martin, turning unawares, could not halt in time to prevent a fall. Over the low-lurking Flannelette boy went Martin, singing out (for he had dropped into the ways of the juniors): "All right! That's one on you, Nisbet!" Nisbet would be off, Martin knew, almost before he had come thwack to the floor—hence the yell of vengeance. This was all play, of course; here was no serious feud.

Indeed, Martin had been anti-militarist ever since seeing the boy Jenkins's distorted lip upon that morning after battle, and from rough play never now passed to warfare. But he knocked his head as he fell, in this horse-play greatly to the chagrin of Nisbet, who had not intended to damage him.

"Have you hurt yourself?" he cried. "I didn't mean——" He halted in his flight and hastened back on hearing the dull thwack.

The bump brought the head of the Flannelette department craning round the corner to inquire what the youngsters were doing.

"Oh, it's you!" said Mr. Watson. "Get to work, dam' 'e! Get to work. Do you take this ware'us' for a cock-pit? Hullo—ye've had a bump, man. See, go down and bathe that in the lavatory, or your father, if he sees it, will think ye are developing the bump of artistry and skitchin' too quick!"

The combination of words made the meaning of "skitchin'" blaze at him this time. How did they know? Someone must have found one of his efforts. He went hot with a dread lest the discovered specimen might have been one of his depressing failures.

"Go on! Go on! Go and bathe that, or your father will think ye get into too many broils."

Eventually he was caught in the "skitchin'" act, too intent to cover his work up. One of the juniors—Jimmy Clarkson—found him at his dear employ—that in Glassford Street was truancy—and (as they say) "blowed the gaff." After that open discovery there was something like a demand for his "skitches"—those with a tendency to caricature especially. Also, of course, there was the inevitable banter about his pursuit. But enough has been said to show how absurd was his impression that because he had a blunt-ended pair of scissors in his

waist-coat pocket he was learning manufacturing. You can take a boy to a manufacturing warehouse; but, even though he has the best intentions of learning manufacturing, you cannot make him learn. Do not imagine that Charlie, his department head, aided him in this fallacy, bolstered up his naïve belief that he was *learning the business*. Charlie was no elderly sycophant to flatter him in that error. Never could Martin get his piles to be straight. Charlie could build up a stack of goods as if he did it with a plumb-line. Martin never learnt. How woefully often did the stack that he erected come down crash with his weight upon it! He used to have recourse to all sorts of stratagems in his endeavours to build straight. To the delighted amusement of the house he was found one day—in Charlie's absence—putting up a stack from a ladder. Young Nairn of the Fancy Goods department "spotted him" in the act, and had to go round the warehouse in delight telling his cronies "to go and have a look." His idea was to give himself every material advantage, but it was no use. When he was stationed on top of a pile and Charlie threw up pieces to him with which to build, the pile was always ludicrously higgledy-piggledy. Merely in clambering down he would topple it over, and come to the floor with its ruins —like a clown who builds a tower of tables and chairs, and then overbalances to amuse the children in the circus ring. Everybody else seemed able to stand on a growing pile, catch the pieces thrown up, lay them in place, mount up with the mounting tower of soft goods till the roof was almost reached, and the builder had to crouch lest his head hit there. Then would he descend neatly to the floor and look up at his tower content. Not so Martin. He never could look up content, but always in chagrin. This fact leaked out at home. His father, who had looked on at the instruction in pile-

building for a few moments, and then passed upon his way, described the scene to his wife. He had perceived in it evidence of Charlie's instructing interest and of Martin's amusingly serious, if blundering, desire even to build stacks decently.

The next time that Martin mentioned he was going out to buy a packet of Black-and-White boards, his mother thought it was time he stopped wasting shillings so.

"You have not an artist's eye," said she. "It is really time you gave up this waste of money. I would like you to be an unselfish boy—thinking of others, thinking of your father's desire to see you gain a working knowledge of the business, applying yourself to it. Why, son, you can't build a pile of Winceys straight! Remember what Carlyle says, I often think of it—I am always quoting it to the maids: 'Do the work that lies nearest thee.' If you can't build a pile of Winceys straight, it is time your boyish conceit about being able to draw was curbed."

"Oh well, Charlie MacDougall likes my sketches," he said.

It was out! It was out at home now! He acknowledged, in response to showering questions, that he sketched almost everybody, and—in defence, and something like rebellion—that the subjects of the sketches liked them.

"I expect they say so to flatter you!" she declared. She thought it her duty to curb conceit in the boy, and his tone was of conceit in his drawing.

"To flatter me!" he said, and wilted at the suggestion, sensitive as mercury.

"Yes, of course. If you were not the son of their employer they would tell you the sketches are absurd. Now you mustn't be conceited."

"I don't think they do that." He bit his lip. He blushed furiously. "I think," he said, trying to ease

his horror at having, perchance, been laughed at, "that some of my drawings are not so bad."

"Now, now, my dear Martin, you should leave others to say that. Always remember the proverb: 'Self-praise is no honour.'"

So he was frozen quiet, but he was determined to buy more boards. There was a shop in Victoria Road, a stationer's shop, in which Bristol boards were sold. He opened the front door, made a feint of wandering about in front of the house, whistling, shuffling the gravel, then slipped out, ran all the way there, bought a couple of thick fivepenny boards, ran again all the way back—to find the front door shut. He went round to the back, and knocked on the kitchen window.

"Who's there?" called the cook anxiously.

"It's me, Martin."

The cook opened.

"You gave me a fright," said she.

"Have father and mother missed me?"

"Your mother has been asking where you were—just this minute. There are some folk arrived."

"Who?"

"Who is it?" she asked the maid, who had entered the kitchen.

"Mrs. Harringway."

Martin felt ashamed. His plan had been to get back quietly indoors, run up to his room with the boards under his jacket, come down again, and, if any questions were asked, say: "Oh, I've just found two boards that I didn't know I had." He did not like the plan now. It would have pained his mother, had she discovered it, pained her deeply, but a greater pain would have been to know that it was Mrs. Harringway who made him feel ashamed. He could meet his mother's eyes, he thought; it was at the name of Mrs. Harringway that he fell shy, for she

was a woman whose visits meant much to him. She was the mother of Reginald Harringway, one of Glasgow's most promising young artists, though not on that score was she welcomed as a guest by Mrs. Moir, but (as well as on account of old family connections) on account of her social standing, her dinners (with silver covers, and green-shaded electric lights), her long absences from town in the summer, when she was in the Highlands, and her flights in mid-winter to places with such meaningful names as The Riviera and Cairo.

He rushed quietly upstairs, put the boards on the table in his room, and then descended to the drawing-room. The sooner he showed face the better, if his mother had only recently missed him. He entered almost sheepishly. He felt as though Mrs. Harringway would see right through him. She was talking when he appeared, and looked round smiling.

"Ah! Here you are!"

"Where have you been, Martin?" asked Mrs. Moir. "You're frightfully hot."

"I've been running round the Park—right to Victoria Road and back," he answered.

"That's just like John!" said Mrs. Moir. "John is training for some college sports. He writes home to Martin about it all. Better go and rub down, dear, and give your hair a brush. You look wild!"

Martin departed, and when presentable he again returned, though he would fain have stayed away altogether. He was the most miserable of liars. He wore a wan look, like a Rossetti virgin, when he came to the drawing-room again.

"See what I've been showing your mother," said Mrs. Harringway, and she handed a sketch-book to him. "My boy did these—when he was your age. They may interest you. You are still drawing, I hope?"

"A little." He glanced doubtfully towards his mother. There was a furtive look on his face that made Mrs. Harringway think perhaps she had been wrong in believing that he would turn out "a charming young fellow," as she had told her husband. Yet perhaps that look only meant that the mother had some black mark against him, and that, for some reason, mention of drawing recalled its existence. She was glad to see his face clear as he held out his hand for the sketch-book.

"They are sketches my Reginald made from the age of seven to the age of fifteen," she said. "I unearthed them to-day. I thought I had lost them, and I've been showing them to everybody again. I'm afraid," to Mrs. Moir, "that I'm a fond old mother."

Mrs. Moir's eyes melted.

"We all dote on our sons," she said.

Mrs. Harringway considered that for a moment.

"I'm longing to see Reginald again," she went on. "He is in Italy just now, and writes to tell me that he's going to have a one-man show in Rathbone's in Gordon Street when he comes home."

"Oh, indeed! That sounds successful!" said Mrs. Moir.

"He's worked for it," answered Mrs. Harringway. "He's been hard up often; but he is so independent. He hated taking our money for his art training. He used to say: 'Wait till I prove it,' when I wanted to help him along——"

"What is he doing in Italy?" Martin asked.

"Painting, Martin—painting in sunshine."

"I should like to go to Italy. I wonder if I could be an artist!" He shook his head over the sketch-book. "I'm afraid that when I was seven I didn't draw like this."

Mr. Moir arrived. He had been dining a man at his

club and was only now come home. He liked Mrs. Harringway, and Mrs. Harringway appreciated his sterling qualities, although keen and sensitive enough to see in his eyes, at times, a suggestion that he thought her amusing—and thought her so just a little bit primitively, rather because he found her unusual than because he found her witty. However, he atoned for such lapses by catching the ideas in her epigrams (and putting his head on side to con them over), whereas on many ears they fell unremarked, or were esteemed merely futile. "A very sterling man," was her totalling of him, "although the sterling manufacturer thinks I am just a little bit eccentric!" After they had exchanged the phrases of greeting he had to inquire, seeing Martin's intentness over the sketch-book, what it was that he peered into. She promptly told him and, flicking on his pince-nez, he leant towards Martin to look over the book with him.

"Gad! I don't know," he ejaculated. "Look here, Rachel," to his wife. "I think some of our boy's sketches come pretty near this. Martin, haven't you any of those last ones that you did to show Mrs. Harringway?"

Mrs. Harringway had meant well. To tell of her motives—it was in pursuance of her crusade on behalf of Art, and the love of art in a Philistine world, that she had brought the book, knowing of Martin's bent. Two-thirds of the reason, perhaps, had been to stimulate Martin, one-third only to show her own boy's work. If she had desired to add glory to her son, or to herself, there were more recent and mature examples of his skill that could have been produced. But now she felt annoyance on hearing Mr. Moir's remark. It was indeed a trifle ill-bred—not like him, she thought! She had to try very hard to be broad-minded for a moment, just for a moment. Then she was laughing at herself. Was not her aim bearing fruit? "We are only half civilised,"

she thought. "I am nearly as primitive as this woman!" Then she thought better of herself: "At least my mother-love is love of an individual. Had Reginald been determined to be a candlestickmaker I should, by now, have been proud of his candlesticks!"

Martin could not be got to go for his drawings. He thought, he said, that Mrs. Harringway had seen them all. No—he had nothing done recently to show. His mother was not wholly pleased when he said diffidently, giving back the book to Mrs. Harringway: "I wonder if my drawings at seven were as good. I don't think so." She should have been pleased, having so lately advised him to let others praise his work and be humble in himself. But she thought he looked crushed before Mrs. Harringway; he seemed gawky before her—and she was annoyed.

When Mrs. Harringway was gone he sat staring into the fire so long that his father suddenly said: "Hullo! what are you brooding about, my boy? You look the picture of misery."

"I wonder," said he in reply, "if I drew as well when I was seven as——"

Mrs. Moir laughed.

"Silly boy! Of course not," she said. "Why! you don't draw as well now!" and she cast a glance toward her husband, for his backing. "I don't suppose you ever could. Reginald Harringway was made for an artist—that's why he's got on so well. And even he—look at the years! Isn't that so, father?"

"Oh yes. A hobby, my boy, a hobby. As Scott said about writing: 'A good crutch, but no use as a walking-stick.' No, no; don't get back on to your idea of art."

Indeed there was little likelihood of that—for the present. Martin was not listening to Mr. Moir, but his mother's last words were working wonders. He could

never—never—draw as well as Reginald Harringway drew at seven years of age! The phrase kept on in his head. He could never make drawings as good—all his life to come—as these drawings he had been looking at! An hour or two later, in bed, he had another facet of that thought: "What would Mrs. Harringway think of my saying that I wondered if I had drawn as well at seven as her son—when I don't, and never will, never will!" Darkness made matters worse. He blushed from head to toe. He withered in misery. He got out of bed, lit his light, and without looking at them, he burnt all his drawings. It was a slow process, for he had to keep the chimney from catching fire. Having burnt all the drawings, he burnt these two Bristol boards that he had bought secretly that evening. If he did not now draw as well as Reginald Harringway had drawn at seven years of age—if, above all, he never could draw as well—why, then, he would never draw again! What was the good?

CHAPTER IV

He drew again. He "skitched" again. He was skitching within the month. He had to. He could not help himself. His allied forces of Devotion, Hope and Pride had been decimated by his mother's shells; but, though feeling in his heart crushed as do the Provençal peasants look, masterfully represented—or misrepresented?—on the canvas of Millet, he began again, made a fresh start.

So much attracted his eyes in the following desolated days. Desolated? Well, in a way. His life was like a painting done on black background. No gleam of white shone through. *He would never draw again!* That thought haunted him—and made him see the world with more affection than ever. Here, perhaps, was one more case such as Apostle Paul had in mind when he said that "all things work together for good to them that love God," though Mrs. Moir might not allow the quotation as applicable. He saw not only with more affection than before, but he saw more surely. From the railway bridge over Clyde, coming and going from and to town, he looked down on the decks of the screw-steamers that used to lie (and may still, perchance) on the south side, near the Jamaica Bridge—*Davaar, Kinloch, Kintyre* were their names. One of them was generally there, sometimes two. The third would be smoking away round the north end of Arran and down Kilbrannan Sound to the Mull of Kintyre, for all three were Campbeltown boats. The presence (or the absence, for that matter) of these vessels, conjured up many a picture of the blue and purple firth. Their lines, too, seen from above, had

always cast a spell on him; but now the spell was greater.

"I will never draw again! What is the good?" And next moment the train shot out from the canon of houses —and there was the deck of the *Davaar* luring him; while, out in the channel, were the paddle steamers, moored in a segment of a circle, showing the slight bend of the river, a haunting array of decks, mooring buoys, mooring ropes from bows and sterns to the anchored buoys—red smoke-stacks with black tops, red smoke-stacks with a white band and a black top—with two white bands and black top; others with yellow or cream-coloured smoke-stacks; and farther down, a big ship with hull like an iron wall standing high out of the water, was being drawn to a berth by a little, churning paddle-tug with its arch of bracing steel from port to starboard over the after deck; and the stubby skipper stood on the bridge. Such scenes were always offering themselves to his eyes.

If he sat on the up-river side of the railway carriage, he would gloat upon the view there—the horses hauling the lorries across the bridge below—one string going south on the far side, one string going north on the nigher side. What movements of curved neck, what lines of grace, what chunks of thew! His eyes feasted, watching the horses put on weight at the beginning of the bridge, at the slight rise. What attitudes of the drivers, shoulder to the wheel, aslope and tautened like the horses, helping them there, or humouring and urging at the horses' heads. Here came a Clutha (penny steamer that plied on the city stretches of the river) cutting like a little grey-blue steam plough through the dirty stream; down went its hinged smoke-stack as it shot under the arches—and up again, after it was through. Having seen his own river thus, it was appalling to see, in a

picture shop of Gordon Street, as he walked warehousewards, a reproduction of some study by Wyllie, of the river Thames, picture of liners and tugs, appalling to see while in his mind a phrase repeated and repeated: "I shall never draw again! What's the use of trying?"

Farther on, after leaving Buchanan Street, to cut through to Queen Street, just before coming to the Exchange, there was, on the south side of the pavement, a newspaper shop that made a practice of exhibiting the illustrated weeklies in its window. On these he would gloat—then pass on, bearing round to the north of the Stock Exchange, instead of going straight on, so as to study a window of the same kind there.

He was not quite so keen now on showing his blunt-nosed scissors, began to be remiss in that little sartorial trick, seemed less enthusiastic about "going up to business every day"—about being "in my father's warehouse in the city." That he was not now "skitching" in his father's warehouse he would have had to acknowledge to himself, had he been a little more introspective, as the cause of his growing distaste for "The Ware'us'." Certainly, before long, he had to admit to himself a loathing toward the work in Glassford Street. And soon he began to seek for Lethean moments away from it. If he had to go out to—for example—J. & W. Campbell's, along Ingram Street, he hurried there at fever heat, but not for the sake of business, hurried there so that he might, when the duty that took him thence was accomplished, return in a roundabout route, return by the little courts that lie off Argyle Street beyond Candleriggs, where are bird fanciers' shops, old clo' shops, and such emporiums of light and shade and colour, and many fascinating tones —such as have always appealed to the artist. Once seen, they called him back. He imagined that he struck an honourable balance by rushing to his journey's end, when

business took him out, strolling and gazing in these dear haunts—then rushing back to the warehouse again. But calculation was not his strong point. He had never been an adept at school in the trick problems that premise if So-and-So and So-and-So make so much, how much will Something else, upon certain given conditions, make? This rushing to a journey's end, then loafing, and anon rushing back was, it is to be feared, a piece of trick arithmetic beyond him.

Even with his lunch he began to play tricks—so as to spend as much time as possible in the Mitchell Library. He began his visits there to see *The Studio, The Magazine of Art, The Scottish Art Review,* in the upstairs newspaper-room. His migration downstairs to the reading-room was occasioned by reading in one of the art magazines a quotation from John Addington Symonds's *The Renaissance in Italy.* What was *The Renaissance?* Had he ever heard of it at school? He could not recall. Probably not. One book led to another, for so many books held reference to others. He was a daily visitor at the Mitchell Library, a familiar figure at the broad counter. His lunch hour expanded—it is perhaps hardly necessary to say to those who are themselves readers. It was now only nominally the "lunch hour"; it was actually an hour and a half. That passed unnoticed. He was not the only junior whose lunch "hour" was a nominal hour—and the seniors had been juniors themselves once upon a time. Finding antidotes for manufacturing became almost a mania with Martin, though he was neither argumentative nor philosophic enough to draw up in his mind any protest against a condition of things that relegated what should be avocations and pursuits to the category of antidotes.

His father and mother thought that he was developing into a thoughtful and steady boy. Of art he never spoke

to Mrs. Moir now. How could he? It would only be when the engine blew up that she would know of the great head of steam within. It was the period of the Illustrated Interview; hardly a magazine that did not conduct its readers into the homes of prominent men. And now and then an artist—in the sense of the word that implies an easel or a drawing-table—would be interviewed. He used to read all the interviews he could find. To Raymond Blathwaite he owed an immense debt of gratitude. A hunger for intercourse, a necessity for kinship with, and confirmation from those who came from his own planet (as it were) moved him. The gregarious, the communal, the sociable instinct he felt strongly. He talked to everybody—car conductors, the maids at home, the cook, even the gardener—a morose man, sourly considering rules of horticulture, values of loam, and seeming to look upon all flowers as things he had made instead of as miracles. Still—even the gardener's bawdy stories (mild ones, suitable for a boy in his teens) were better than the conversations of his mother's friends. These seemed all dead to him. They were no more sociable than mummies or tigers—for she had both kinds.

Martin's greatest friends were thus really the portraits of people in the magazines. Chance (or God, I do not know) had made Mariano Fortuny the first of these friends; and the early affection remained. He might, later, meet portraits of greater men than Fortuny; but Fortuny would still be great to him—a great friend, an early affection, one of those men with a certain look on the face—the look of what to him meant friendship.

At home he came to be considered "odd" and "unsociable," perhaps "unhealthy." He never considered his mother "unsociable" because she did not care to look at his photographs of artists. And seeing that at home he felt most lonely when the house was most full

of visitors, he took her word for it and believed that he was unsociable. The "parties" in winter-time, given by his mother, or given by her friends, to which he was forced to go, were ordeals. He had never played truant from school; but more than once, dispatched to a "party," he had spent the time of the "party" sitting on some one of the many seats in Queen's Park, shivering and happy in a secretive way, listening to the sounds of the city below, of leaves rustling, of people going past with tapping sticks, feet that hurried, feet that loitered.

He was found out once in such a truancy. That was just a little while before he left school and came to the warehouse. He was found out, cross-questioned, told that he had insulted the people who had invited him to their "young people's evening," and also had deceived his parents. It was his mother who told him that. Mr. Moir said: "Oh no! That's too bad. He didn't want to go! I wouldn't say too much. If we had known he didn't want to go as badly as that——"

"He should be sociable!" his mother had said.

"Perhaps he doesn't like the Smith-Smythes, eh?" That was the droll name of the people who had given this "evening."

"I don't dislike them—I didn't want to go. I don't like charades—and recitations—and heat. That was all."

Mr. Moir chuckled to himself. Here, in his estimation, was valid enough reason for not going.

"And where did you spend all the time?" Mrs. Moir had asked.

"In the Park."

A look, that even in those days he had begun to dread, came on her face. It communicated itself for a brief moment to Mr. Moir's face; but Mr. Moir had not a sinister mind.

"And you came home and told us you enjoyed the party!" his mother had cried. "You lied——"

"Oh! tut, tut!" said Mr. Moir. "Let him be. This is too much like Army discipline. If a soldier isn't careful he can be arrested not only for a specific crime, but for half a dozen others—drunk, soiling his clothes, being out without leave, resisting arrest, and so forth, when *drunk* would cover it. He didn't go to the party: that's all. He didn't want to go. If you don't want to go to a party, boy, say so."

"I said so, dad."

"Oh well, that'll do."

"I can't think how you spent all that time alone in the Park! Very strange, very strange!" Mrs. Moir had said.

Now she began to think that perhaps he was not, after all, growing "steady." He was developing secretiveness, she thought. And doubtless he was; almost anybody who is mocked because of his loves will grow secretive regarding them—though *secretive* will not be his word for the silence; *protective* perhaps. There was such a ready "Yes rather!" always came from Martin when Mrs. Moir asked him if he enjoyed work, that she felt oddly unsatisfied. It was more in a tone of suppressed hilarity than of genuine acknowledgment that he spoke. Well might he say "Yes rather!" She had waged war on him, for his own good perhaps, but he had put up no defence. She doubted if he was vanquished. He was not vanquished. He had run to earth—to borrow a phrase from our ladies and gentlemen who hunt foxes. The lunch hour—or nominal hour—was devoted to gulping lunch and devouring books on art in the Mitchell Library. But there were other odd half-hours in the day that he could snatch. For example—Charlie MacDougall would send him down to Stewart & MacDonald's in Buchanan

Street, with half a dozen patterns to show to somebody there, and to bring back an order. Invariably Martin arrived out of breath at that great rambling store (much more rambling, even, than it appears from the street), giving occasion for the head of the department that he scouted out there to say jocularly to his own young men: "There's an example in celerity for you boys." "You boys" grinned. They knew—and the head knew it too—that such haste did not always imply devotion to business.

Hurriedly would Martin return up Buchanan Street, hurriedly would he turn the corner at Edward's, hurriedly dash on to Ingram Street. Then suddenly he would disappear from the pavement as if swallowed up. He had indeed and in truth "run to earth." He had plunged down into the basement smoking-room of a tea-shop. There he ordered a cup of coffee and a cigarette. There he sat and dreamed on the broad and happy plush divan, while his heart returned to its normal beat. With a *Graphic,* or an *Illustrated London News* on his knee he sat at rest, out of the odour of soft goods. He imagined himself slightly, vaguely, in love with the girl in the little glass house upstairs, near the door, the cashier with the lustrous black hair. That added to the pleasure of fleeing, surreptitiously, from the unsought field of action. The visible world existed very acutely for him, and round him here, in Glasgow, he could match the pictures from many lands that he saw in the art journals at the Mitchell Library. Down in the smoke-room, the weeklies run through, he would ponder over his own unpainted pictures. Around Albion Street, and the Trongate, and in Wall Street, were such shops as Venice seemed to give to the etcher. There was a restaurant in Queen Street, where men stood to eat, a place that provided the most fascinating poses,

quaint poses resembling the photographic-like ones in the illustrated weeklies. There was a public-house in Argyle Street, before the door of which wild girls in many petticoats, in high-heeled boots, with wild hair and tartan shawls over their heads, were always dancing and sparring and heel-and-toe shuffling like Steinlen figures. Beyond Kingston Dock—for he had wandered so far one lunch "hour" instead of going to the Library, the day being too splendid to be cooped up—a day in which, instead of saying "It is good to be alive!" one might well say "I believe I shall never die!"—wandering one day, looking at the river and the shipping, and the yelling stevedores dodging ropes and cranes, he found three or four little Spanish brigantines, with ear-ringed Iberians unloading oranges. Somehow a box broke, the oranges fell out, and the brown hands gathered up the golden fruit. The soft goods warehouse was very far away.

This scene had additional joy, was intimately dear to him because a reference to Vierge, in a magazine article on pen-and-ink drawing had sent him recently hunting for the work of that artist of the Peninsula, and he had found, and pored over, his illustrations to *Don Pablo de Segovia*. These little Spanish orange boats, with their Spanish sailors, reminded him of Vierge. But there were many other pictures etching themselves upon his mind—the pigeons fluttering down from the cornices of the Exchange, light grey and blue against the drab smoked stone, dainty on the broad steps and pavement; the men with little straps round their trousers below the knee, tearing up the streets, swinging pick and wielding shovel, men such as he saw in Brangwyn drawings. The fact that he was never censured at the warehouse for being out too long (seldom had even the comment: "They kept you a long while!" made to him

on his return), caused him to go on labouring under the illusion that he was giving his father, as they say, a *fair deal,* caused him to believe that he had evolved the right answer to his problem in arithmetic.

When he became a devotee of the underground smoke-room—a room kept fresh, despite its position below street level, by the fanners that perennially changed the air—he, as the phrase was among his "ware'us'" fellows, for abandon, "let her go Gallacher!" In underground smoke-rooms, lit by soft electric light that twinkled on silver-like coffee-urns, on brown sugar in blue bowls, sugar that was so delightful to play with, to heap up and watch as it sagged together and settled down again—in underground smoke-rooms, before the doors of which hung straight-folded heavy curtains, Martin recovered of the routes of his forces, ceased to remember the black background, forgot to repeat: "You will never draw as well as he did at seven!" He saw a man drinking something amber-hued from a glass set in a silver cup, an amber liquid with a shred of yellow lemon in it. He pricked his ears, and hearkened for its name—and discovered Russian tea. So, over Russian tea and Turkish cigarettes, he let the time pass, dreaming and healing himself, thinking of the sleepy face of Fortuny.

His father knew naught of all this. His mother knew naught of it; and it was well for her peace that she did not know. Here he healed himself to-day. Here he suddenly became joyous again. It was as if the enemy of occupation had abruptly left his dominions. Rising, he hastened out and bought a sketch-book and a B. B. pencil, returning to the warehouse (after having been out from three to half-past four, merely to go from Glassford Street to Union Street and back!) jaunty and joyous.

"By!" exploded Charlie MacDougall. "Here he

comes! Well, sir—what have you to say for yourself?"

"All I can say is that I wish I was not Ebenezer Moir's son, Mr. MacDougall, and then you could report me," answered Martin, putting his parcel openly into the desk.

"I don't know," said Charlie, peering at him, "but what it is my duty to report you as it is! I don't mind half an hour for a quarter of an hour's errand—but an afternoon!"

"The worst of it is," said Martin, "that if you report me I won't get the sack!"

Old Charlie looked into his face more intently, as if studying it.

"Oh well—come and give me a hand," he said, and heaved a sigh, and they fell to work hauling out pieces from the many stacks, sending them down the hoist to be calendered—then built up the stacks again. Martin was trying his best—his very best—to build decently and in order. But he never forgot what old Charlie said, that afternoon, suddenly stopping in the "brick-laying," as he called the building of cloth stacks.

"Mr. Martin Moir," he said slowly, "ye dinna gi'e a spittle for your work!"

Charlie had got the truth of it! But here was six o'clock, closing time, time to go home. He was sorry again, sorry for Charlie more than himself—much as Bowles, on being discharged, had seemed to be more sorry for Ebenezer Moir than for himself. Charlie had known the truth a long time, though he had never stated it. But there was something in his tone, when he did make the statement, in his uncouth Crown Street terms, not at all as if he was censuring. In fact the voice stuck, the intonation; and though the words were drastic, direct, uncouth, the intonation seemed to imply half-desperate regret instead of annoyance. Shame-facedly

Martin went down to wash and prepare to go home. The office boy was downstairs at the same employ.

"Is my father gone?" asked Martin.

"Yes—he's off."

Others were waiting to wash, some carrying their own towels and soap, some content with the communal roller one and the yellow bar. Martin went up again to the warehouse. Employees were hurrying away with the lightsome steps of men set free. "Good-nights" were exchanged. Charlie was taking off his warehouse coat and donning his home-going one.

"I say, Mr. MacDougall," said Martin, "I do hope you understand that I don't take longer to go to places because I'm Ebenezer Moir's son. I would do it anyhow. I only came back at all to-day, I believe, because I remembered that I was Ebenezer Moir's son!"

"Fine, man, fine!" said Charlie MacDougall in a gentle low voice. He arranged his coat, put his hand up behind and tugged his waistcoat down, tugged the lapels, peered at Martin's eyebrows. "As sure as I'm lookin' you in the face, my lad," he said, "I think your father made a great mistake when he sent you here."

"Am I no good, Mr. MacDougall?"

Naïve question!

"Oh, you're all right! But, man, it's evident in the very way ye move that ye wasn't meant for a manufacturer! It is indeed."

Martin laughed oddly.

"What would you advise, then, Mr. MacDougall?" he asked.

"An artist, man, an artist! Man, if I could only be sure of gettin' your father in a wide-eyed frame of mind I'd suggest it like, hint it like."

"He won't hear of it," said Martin. "He says the only art I can go in for is Applied Art."

"And where can ye apply it here?"

"After I learn the business—designing cloth."

"Rubbish, lad! Do ye know what I'm goin' to tell ye?"

"No, Mr. MacDougall."

"Ye'll go to hell if ye stay here. Ye've stopped skitchin' and take to sittin' in smoke-rooms and smokin' they ceegrettes."

"How did you know?"

"I've seen ye goin' in! Sixteen is't, or seventeen? Get back to your skitchin'. That was better. Not a skitch have I seen under the order-book now, nor in the blotter, for weeks. I believe I'll speak to your father—No, I don't see how I can. After all, I've worked for him fifteen years, but that doesna mean that I'm his adviser. Anyhow, my lad, I wish ye wad get on with your skitchin' again."

"But they tell me they're no good."

"Who do?"

"Er—oh—" Martin stammered.

"Oh well, it's beyond me," said Mr. MacDougall. "Good-night, lad."

CHAPTER V

It is to be feared that the emotions awakened in Martin's heart by that "Good-night, lad," were emotions of self-pity. Though his hat was a-tilt, his back straight, though his general bearing was "smart" as he joined the homeward-bound throng in Ingram Street, it was a dolorous countenance that he wore. How pathetic it was, thought he (critical at last toward what, so far, he had taken for granted), that he should be spurred by outsiders to follow the calling of his predilection, stimulated to pursue his true bent by strangers, and at home be discouraged in that pursuit. He was void of any word on behalf of his father's attempts to meet him half-way, to acknowledge his inclination even as a "hobby," to look forward to the day when his love for art might find useful outlet—designing new patterns for flannel shirts. He was, in a word, very sorry for himself—and felt at the same time a little proud of his silence when MacDougall had asked: "Who told you your drawings are no good?"

As he paced westwards so considering, he was pleasantly importuned by the odour of newly-ground coffee-beans. His heart stirred; and instead of going on to Gordon Street and the homeward train, he disappeared abruptly from the pavement; he had dived down to his sanctuary, the tea-house in Ingram Street. To-night there was nobody in the smoking-room when he descended. The felt-slippered waiter, in ordinary lounge suit, brought coffee and cigarettes, set the polished match-box and ash-tray, stood beside him chatting; then, having laid an illustrated weekly beside him, departed.

Not a sound was to be heard but that of footsteps in the street as homing people trod over the dulled bull's-eye lights set before the window in the pavement instead of gratings; just that—and anon the sound of coffee-grinding again, or it might be knife-cleaning, or of the working of the air-cleansing apparatus. At any rate it did not jar the quiet. A feeling of exaltation came to him. This might be what Walt Whitman meant by "I loaf and invite my soul." There was much of subdued richness, to Martin's eyes, in this deserted smoke-room. It was like reproductions of Valasquez—rich and sober and velvety. The door opened gently and two men entered, talking quietly, and took seats at a far table. The waiter drifted in to them, listened to their low-spoken order, drifted away. They spread a chess-board before them, set up the pawns, the kings, the queens and the knights all in order, and slowly Martin slipped the sketch-book out, and began to draw again—within the month. He was "skitchin'" again.

The artist in him had triumphed over the melancholy youth of seventeen. But the rest from actual drawing had done good—the sad rest; for he had been looking at things, had been observing, had been seeing with a poignant clarity. He knew himself, as he looked at the chessplayers and put them down, that this was the best sketch he had ever made. He was utterly engrossed, so deeply engrossed that he did not know the waiter had observed his occupation and was standing behind him, looking over his shoulder at the progress of the pencil-sketch. "Man! You're an artist!" made him jump so that he knocked over the sugar-bowl. The waiter caught it before it fell to the floor, and, muttering: "Well caught!" set it on another table. He was an artist! Someone had told him he was an artist! Another man now entered and called the waiter away.

Good life! Time was flying. He had better be hieing away to Gordon Street Station and the train for Langside. Off he set, once more, upon the homeward way—perky now instead of dolorous. As he came to the pavement again, having crossed the end of Miller Street, a voice arrested him.

"Hullo, Moir!"

He wheeled—and saw his one-time Literature Master at the Grammar School where he had been, as the word is applied, educated.

"Mr. Barker!" he ejaculated.

"What are you doing in this part of the world?" asked Barker, with high-held head, twinkling a greeting.

"This *is* my part of the world," said Martin, as they shook hands.

"Oh! What is your means of support?" and Barker fell in step beside his ex-pupil.

"I'm in my father's place," replied Martin.

"You are! Modern instead of Classic still rules does it? You look very cocky about it. Quite a 'young man on change,' I suppose?"

"I don't know about that!" And Martin laughed. "I've just been told to-day, in the warehouse, that I'm no good for a soft goods life."

"Great perspicacity!" cried Barker. "Who was the wiseacre?"

"My department head."

"You seem to flourish on affronts and belittlings," said Barker, bobbing along beside him, head half turned, twinkling at him through pince-nez that were constantly sagging to right on his nose, dragged down by a slender gold chain.

"Me? Oh yes. I'm accustomed to being told I can't do this, and mustn't do that."

"Ah!" said the school teacher, glittering gleefully.

"It's the young martyr age you're in at present, is it?"

Martin smiled to himself, laying his hand upon the edge of his sketch-book that protruded from his pocket.

"Come and have something to eat with me," said Barker. "I'm ravenous. I've had nothing to eat since one o'clock."

"I'm afraid I should be getting on," Martin answered. "I'm awfully glad to see you again, but——"

"You must come!"

"I've just had some grub."

"Unselfish youth! Come and watch me eat then. I want to inquire into you. I am anxious to see the young man in business who once knew of 'all things that move between the quiet poles'; and of the death of Marlowe, but learnt of Arithmetic and German nothing more than how it feels to be flogged." He cocked his head afresh for the focus of analysis—and saw nothing. He almost let Martin go.

"All right, I'll come with you," said the boy, for the line from Marlowe had given him again a sense of abandon, or of freedom. The supper gong might ring at Queensholme for all he cared. He had suddenly beheld the street before them as with new eyes, saw it soaring and stretching, marked the clouds above falling into the grand scheme or arrangement, as of a stage set for an ecstatic play.

"Where shall we go?" said Barker; and answered the question himself. "Yes, here we are—I know." He led the way across to West Nile Street, and entered a restaurant there, a restaurant with a luring glow in the frosted glass of its window, a sense of brightness in its yellow front. There was a bar-room to left behind swing doors on which the large twisted brass handles glittered brightly. As they passed this door, a man in blue livery swung open a farther one, giving them

entrance to a large chamber with many lights and tables, a twinkling fire, a thick carpet, thick as the drawing-room carpet at Queensholme.

Barker was ravenous. He had muttered something on entering about a Welsh-rarebit; but when they were seated and a waiter (who concentrated the high and low tones of the place in himself, with his splash of white shirt and his black suit) had presented a menu card, the teacher discovered a deep appetite, and gave orders for its satisfaction. Martin thought at first that he would eat nothing, but a creamy tomato soup to begin with suggested to him that he was ready for more. The soup finished, Barker felt able to talk. By nature and occupation he was inclined to cynicism, and when he was hungry he was to some people intolerable. If those on whom he directed his dialectics took umbrage at him and declared he was "all wrong" and arguing for arguing's sake, he would persist in his contentions, saying: "Well, refute if you can!" He had, in argument, the confidence of sparrows, and the agility.

"What on earth did you go into your father's place for?" he asked, wiping his lips with the napkin and frowning at its over-starched condition. "He is in the cloth business, is he not?"

"My people wanted me to."

"Oh—that was very self-centred of them."

"Well, I must tell you that my father explained that things were not at all what they should be—of course this is between ourselves——"

"Oh, quite!" Barker said, and twinkled, with a suggestion of derision. "Your father explained to you—I see," and up went his head perkily.

"All the manufacturers in Glasgow are feeling worried just now," Martin explained. "My father told me that he was worried about the future, and would be glad if I

could see my way to go into the soft goods business."

Barker smiled more broadly.

"So you went in for his sake? How long ago?"

"Over a year now. Well, you see, he explained that things necessitated one of us going in soon, and my brother is doing so well at school that he thought if I didn't mind about it——"

His old master stared and frowned and his nostrils dilated.

"You seem to be developing into a prig!" he said.

"Prig? I do feel that it sounds a bit queer as I tell it. But that's as near as I can explain. We had a long talk. Anyhow, I went into the business."

"And now you imagine that you are a manufacturer! Playing at being a manufacturer, I expect!"

Martin stared now. He had thought it was a conversation they were engaged upon—a slightly rude conversation, perhaps, but old teachers have rights, he felt, just as have parents. Now, however, it seemed that he had been under cross-examination.

"It's all side and rubbish to talk about going into business for papa's sake!" scoffed Barker.

"I'm only telling you the truth!" said Martin indignantly.

"Then you are a prig."

Martin did not take umbrage. He sat considering whether he was a prig or not—and so annoyed Barker, who scented, erroneously, in Martin's lack of anger at the charge, a high sense of superiority in that young man.

"I'm not a prig!" Martin said suddenly, looking fairly into Barker's eyes.

"Ah! That's better," said the teacher, and beamed on his ex-pupil. "I'm trying to discover if there is anything dynamic in you."

Martin's gaze roved blankly over the man before him. He surveyed the egg-like forehead. From the sparse eyebrows to the crown of the head seemed all forehead with one or two beads of moisture on it and a little fluff at the top.

"And I thought you were just having a queer kind of chat," Martin answered simply, and wondered what Barker meant exactly by "dynamic." To catechise frankness leads to annoyance—sometimes to the catechist first. Barker stopped in time. He ceased trying to be clever after the whitebait remains had been taken away and the veal balls and roast potatoes and cauliflower had been set before him. It suddenly occurred to him that though he was intensely clever he need not whet his wit on this young man; so, instead of trying to bore into Martin's soul, or *ego* (which was so open, indeed, that boring was absurd—dipping was the only method for anyone who wished a sample), he ordered wine—and took up the role of adviser instead of catechist.

"Of course it's perfectly natural for your father to want you in his business," said he; "but from what I saw of you at school I should say that one of the arts was your *métier*. Do you ever try to write?"

"No." Martin shook his head and fell into a disconcerting far-off gaze.

At that moment a young man entered, and, passing their table, said: "Hullo, Barker!"

"Hullo, Wilson!" cried Barker. "How are you?"

"All right," and the youth passed on, firing over his shoulder: "What are you up to? You're quiet. Not debating?"

Martin, glancing after this cheery person, liked his appearance, although he thought him rather unusual. His hair was very long. He had a carriage of head that reminded Martin of "Velasquez, by himself."

"You know who that is," said Barker.

"No."

"Don't you remember Wilson?"

Martin turned to the young man, upon whom his sense of courtesy had kept him from looking over-markedly till then, and recognised an old schoolfellow.

"So it is! He looks like an artist!"

"Looks like a young fool!" said Barker. "But he is an artist. I'm told he's doing big things. Wilson! Wilson! He doesn't hear!" He rose and went over to the table at which Wilson had seated himself, and they exchanged a few words. Then Wilson looked over toward Martin.

"Oh!" he cried, and leaping to his feet came back eagerly, Barker behind him. "It's you, Moir!" and they shook hands. "I didn't recognise you." He turned to the school-teacher. "Look here, Barker, don't begin argue-bargying. He can't help it, Moir, must always be taking sides," he explained, turning to Martin, "not for the side's sake, but for the savage, conquering, aggrandising fun of it! I believe he would be annoyed at an exponent of militarism agreeing with him and becoming proselytised if he happened to be arguing on behalf of Peace"—and he tossed his head, so that the mane of dark hair rose and fell.

Martin was delighted with this speech, and with the young man. He had been feeling slightly unsociable toward Barker—but this man he wanted to pump-handle, vulgar as Crown Street and the Gorbals, instead of just shaking hands. He came like an old friend, and as a relief.

"I say," said Martin, "have you been doing cartoons for *Quip* recently?"

"I admit it," Wilson replied, bowing, but clearly pleased.

"I never associated it—the R. Wilson," said Martin, "until Mr. Barker told me just now you were an artist."

"You look at the signatures on drawings, anyhow," remarked Wilson, sitting down. "You are probably one of those who don't worry much about the joke underneath?"

"Oh, you artists!" cried Barker. "If you draw a picture for a joke——"

Wilson laughed, delighted.

"Draw for a joke is good!" he said. "I must put that in the book." He turned to Martin. "Do you draw?" he asked.

Martin began to pull out his sketch-book; he tore the lining of his coat, but got it out.

"Is this any good?" he asked.

"Oh, humility!" piped Barker. But really he was slightly annoyed that, although their talk had offered opportunity to produce the sketch-book, it had not been produced—and here it was now, being hauled out to show to Wilson before they were fairly seated again.

Wilson looked at the sketch. Then he turned to Barker and said drolly: "Did—you—say—that—our—friend—is—in—the—soft—goods—business?" It was the manner of the man that made large the charm, and Barker smiled. So did Martin. He was like a parched flower under the first raindrop.

"In my father's warehouse, learning manufacturing," he explained, and added: "ostensibly."

"Ah! This is better," cried Barker. "This is more the true man!"

Martin, is this new society, was more alert. He turned to Barker.

"No," he said. "The other version was true too. It was your leading questions that put a different com-

plexion on me. Anyhow—I *am* keen on drawings. And I'm going to draw again too, after to-night."

"What's the mystery?" asked Wilson.

"Oh, nothing! Somebody told me I couldn't draw for nuts, and I chucked it for a bit. Let us talk of something besides Me!"

"Ha! For a bit! Chucked it! You're sensitive. If you listen to people who talk rot like that to you it is time somebody also talked about you—to you! You've got the gift, Moir. You've observed. You've observed not only what's round about you, but how other men *get there* in the same subjects. There's a bit of Vierge in this, is there not?"

"Very likely. I've done some peering into Vierge."

"You've got the gift. But you've been crushed by the Philistines, I suppose, and all you want is——"

"To let your hair grow," said Barker.

Wilson glared at him.

"Don't be blasphemous!" he said.

"I was merely completing your simile!"

"You're all right, old man," Wilson said to Moir, and handed the sketch-book back. "You get on with your work—this work. Don't worry about people who catch your coat-tails and haul you back—let them go to the devil."

"What would you advise?" asked Barker.

"Advise? He doesn't want advice beyond that, does he?"

"I believe I do," said Martin. "I feel bad in the soft goods. My father wants me to go on with it, and then there's my mother——"

"Yes, of course there always is," said Wilson sadly. "And one is generally expected to do what they want. There are generally sisters too. Of course the trouble is that we never set up to direct them as to what they

should do. It is an unwritten law that all the advice and so forth is given *to* the artist. We have to be sociable with them, but they won't be sociable with us. You can't be sociable with tigers! If you are sociable with them they'll offer you advice. If you let them be sociable with you—they'll be familiar."

"I'm afraid you are very young though wondrous wise," commented Barker. "But you'll learn more."

"Perhaps we'll all learn—learn a lot——" said Wilson. He seemed suddenly as if constrained, seemed to freeze. Barker rose.

"I'll leave you two," he said.

"Oh, but I—" began Martin, "I feel that you——"

"He wants to stay with me," said Wilson, looking up at Barker who had signed to the waiter, "but now it's not relatives that worry him—it's his sense of courtesy!"

"I'm going across the road to play a game of billiards," Barker told them. "There are always some men there I know."

"Perhaps we'll pop over and join you later," Wilson said.

"Ta-ta just now, then—I won't shake hands at that rate," and giving a smile to Martin, full of encouragement, and a nod of thanks to Wilson, Barker departed. After the wink-wink-wink of the swing door had stopped on his exit, Martin and Wilson began to talk of what had happened to each since schooldays, of their likes and dislikes. They sat a long time, dallied there indeed until the lights over other tables went out, and the darkness encroached upon them, so that towards the end they sat in a kind of pool of radiance. Martin looked round once for a moment, thinking that perhaps they kept the waiters.

"Are we keeping anybody?" he broke in.

"They'll damn soon let us know if we are!"

Then the waiter's shirt front showed in the surrounding gloom, and he came into the light.

"Very sorry, gentlemen—eleven o'clock," he said.

"Eleven!" gasped Martin.

Time had never flown so before. Wilson noticed the start, so did not, when they came out, propose to detain Martin longer. They walked through the lane opposite, but though they saw Barker there, they merely said good-night to him again. He was in his element, standing before the closing doors of the billiard-room, deep in argument with another man, on Free Trade and Protection, a ring standing round listening with delight.

"Queer devil Barker," said Wilson, as they went on. "He is shoving Free Trade down that man's throat. Last time I saw him he was in a crowd of Free Traders and waving the Protectionist banner. Well, he enjoys himself, I suppose! Look here—I won't ask you to come to my studio now, for I expect you want to get home. But take a note of the address or you'll forget it: 75 West Regent Street. Come up to-morrow. Bye-bye!"

"What time shall I come up?"

"Any time. Three stairs up—and a short flight beyond. Afternoon or evening."

And then Martin was alone in the street, feeling elated, and full of daring. Packed cars jangled past; trace-horses loped down Renfield Street, the trace-boys sitting side-saddle on their backs, were hitched on to waiting cars at the foot of the hill to help the two horses in the long, slow pull; cabs rattled to the station, showing glimpses of people in evening dress; a couple of soldiers went by, click-click, clickety-click. What a life! In the gutter drunk men argued; policemen eyed them, and then approaching said: "Come on! Come on! Move on!"

What a day it had been—what a full-packed day!

What an exhilaration was in his heart as he swung into the station, and the orange-lit clock showed him that in one minute a train should go. He sprinted up the platform in a sprint that brother John would have admired. He was so happy in having met a man who understood, that he could have whooped aloud, could have kissed all the girls, could have called every man he met brother and friend. He understood the meaning of Keats's "unheard melodies." There was an orchestra of them within him. He was in the mood now to perceive great meaning even in such a statement as that the morning stars sang together. Behold the light in the big clock! Behold the sheen in the shutters that were up before the bookstall! Behold the glamour overhead—the wreaths of steam and smoke showing pale blues and oily purples—the smudged azure of the glass roof over all. He found a corner seat in a carriage; and, as the train went out, joggling at first over crossing lines, he wanted to dance to that dancing sound. The train rumbled across the bridge; and it was, to-night, a rumble like the roll of kettle-drums. Far below was the river, the deep-dyed fuliginous river, showing dropped gold from masthead lights in the midst of its mugginess, showing swirling streaks, oily, rouge-like—slimy purples, shuddery deep, blacky greens. A light slid under the bridge. Wharf lights suddenly, if dimly, showed that it was a light on a launch that, as it sped along, disturbed the stream into a multitude of broken ripples.

Then the river was left behind. "Bridge Street! Bridge Street!"—and they paused a moment, and were off again. As the train rattled up to the high-level platform at Eglinton Street, a white-painted train screamed parallel with them, and rushed on upon the low level, emitting sparks, showing its streak of white with a blaze of lit windows, each going out suddenly, like the closing

of a telescope, as it tore into the tunnel there, leaving only coils of grey smoke and steam in the empty station.

It was not the half-bottle of wine! It was companionship! The mood lasted. Round the sweep of road from Mount Florida Station to Queensholme he walked gaily, very greatly aware of the stars, faint stars high above the ground-mists, and of the suburban freshness after the city's oft-breathed air. A vanman, carolling inside a covered van, invisible between the two lamps (carolling with pleasure, doubtless, over parcels all delivered in the southern suburbs, and his day's work done), set Martin whistling and humming like a homing schoolboy. That he was unwontedly late and would be "jumped on" did not trouble him. He was so joyful that when that thought came to him he merely skipped. He had store of elation to stave off all censure!

Had he? His mother opened the door.

"Oh, Martin!" she said. "What has kept you? I thought it was your feet on the gravel. It is nearly twelve o'clock!"

"It's all right, mother," he answered. "I'm so sorry to be late. I met Mr. Barker and he *would* have me go to supper with him——"

"But when did you leave the office?" she asked.

"Usual time."

"The usual time! Six! And now it is close on twelve! You should not have gone to supper without warning us. And what is the matter with your eyes?"

"I don't know. Do they look funny? They do feel a bit stingy. There's a kind of nipping night-fog coming along. It's ripping though! It makes everything a queer dull rich glow."

She eyed him suspiciously as they walked into the sitting-room. Mr. Moir was still there, evidently keeping his worried wife company. At the words "a queer dull

rich glow" (which he heard as Martin entered) he looked half whimsically at his son.

"What did you have to supper with him?" he inquired.

"You should not jest like that, Ben!" cried Mrs. Moir.

"Well, I'm glad he's not run over. Your mother has been in a pickle, Martin—afraid something had happened to you. How is Mr. Barker? Still at that flogging academy?"

"He was no flogger, dad. He was the best teacher in the school."

"But six till past eleven, Martin!" said Mrs. Moir. "Why——"

"Time flies when old friends meet," said his father.

Martin had not intended to mention the meeting with Wilson. He was becoming self-protective. He wished that Mr. Moir had not made that remark, for immediately his intention of secrecy was almost undone by his desire to tell all about his long, tremendous, inspiring chat with that other "old friend," Wilson. Barker was eclipsed by Wilson. But he kept quiet, for he could not bear to have another thrust, such as had kept him from drawing-paper for all but a month. The Adviser of Reticence within him assured him: "If you mention Wilson there will only be fresh onslaught upon Art."

"That boy is keeping something from us," said his mother, after he had gone up to bed.

"Do you think so?"

"I feel it. He is losing his frankness."

"Oh, I think you've just been worrying to-night. I was worried too, though I said nothing; but I think it is a mistake to seem too anxious over one's boys—it reacts on them."

Up in his room, humming to himself an improvisatory

lilt of joy, Martin turned over his collection of old magazines, each retained carefully for the reason that it held illustration or illustrations showing the face, or the studio, or the work, of some admired artist. One of the most greatly cherished was a *Century Magazine*, already referred to, containing an illustrated article on Fortuny and Regnault. He had not ever read the article, often though he had studied the accompanying illustrations. To-night, having looked for the hundredth time at "Fortuny's studio in Paris (pen sketch by R. Blum, from a photograph)" he turned the pages to look at reproductions of some of that artist's work again and, in turning the pages, some of the printed matter arrested his eye. It was as if one of the paragraphs stepped out from the crowd of paragraphs and button-holed him. He read: "The relic which interested us most, however, was Fortuny's drawing-book at nine years of age. Not a trace of talent here, only a child's scrawls—wild flights of the imagination and poor copies of commonplace drawing-cards; but a treasure nevertheless."

Why had he not read this before? Why had he possessed this old magazine, knowing all the illustrations so well, yet not read a word of the article, an article that contained words so inspiringly applicable to his own case? Here was something with which to confute that voice that whispered to him still: "You will never draw as well as he did at seven." He would show this to his mother, he thought, and get her to take back her wounding words of comparison between his work and that of Reginald Harringway at the age of seven. No; no, better not. Better never to talk of drawing to her. He had a sudden, wild determination, looking at Blum's pen-and-ink of Fortuny's studio, to save up his pocket-money and rent a studio of his own! It would be near Glassford Street. When he was out on business, he would

rush to his studio, draw for a spell, rush back again to the warehouse! The determination was sudden and wild —for he was in his teens; but next moment he knew it for a mere kiddish fancy that could not blossom in this counting-house of a world. Well, to-morrow at any rate he would see a studio. Also he would hear what steps it was requisite to take to become a veritable artist. To-day's talk with Wilson had been half of past, of school, and half of pictures—but of how to be an artist not a word had been said.

Just after he got into bed he heard Mrs. Moir mounting to her room. He could hear her dress rustling on the stairs. At his door she paused. How he hoped she would not come in. He had been aware of something unpleasantly questioning in her eyes on his return home to-night. She was coming in to talk, and talk, and question! She opened the door.

"Are you asleep, Martin?" she asked softly.

He did not reply. He lay motionless, and she went away. Next moment he wanted to call: "I am awake, mother." Should he or should he not? He felt a great love for her, and yet he dared not call her back. Had the room not been dark he might have done so; as it was, he could not—and he let her go. But he felt intensely guilty and thankless when the frou-frou of her skirts had passed away, thinking of years that had gone—back and back. He saw her, it seemed ages ago, mending a toy gun for him. The cork bullet had jammed, and she took a two-pronged fork, thrust one prong down the barrel—and the other clean through the first and second fingers of the hand that held the barrel. He saw again her bravery when she stabbed her fingers. "All right, Martin," she said, looking very pale—and drew forth the prong with just one sigh of pain. He watched her lave the hand, wash it, bind up the fingers. He recalled how, in misery

over her pain, he had thrown the gun in the ash-bucket. He saw her further back, tending him in some illness—chicken-pox, he thought—tending him ever so gently, holding his hands to keep him from scratching his face. He saw her at the window, waving good-bye to him, on his first day at school. Would he call her yet? She wanted to say something to him. No—he could not, he had better not; he shrank from her because her love for him seemed all an amorous torture—a subtle killing of him, a robbing of all the light that he loved, a leaving him in hopeless darkness, with her voice going on and on—telling him not to be selfish, but to try always to please his mother; telling him to honour his father and his mother—and all women, and never contradict them; and to apply himself to work.

His father, in a friendly way, came much nearer to him than did his mother—and yet it was her affection that he craved, because she was his mother, perhaps. That affection she seemed to demand—and ignore. When she did express affection for him (or asked him: "Are you not fond of your mother, Martin?") there was always, it seemed, a request to follow—a request for him to do something that he did not want to do. "Because mother would like it, and you love mother." That was the usual phrase. He gave her love—but she did not seem satisfied with that love. It did not enter his head to consider that she did not know what "love" was. He merely felt wildly hopeless in the darkness over the belief that, to his mother, the proof of any talk of affection could best be given by doing things he did not want to do—"for mother's sake, because you love mother." And in his dreams he found himself agonisedly loving a monster, part like his mother, part like his youthful idea of God—the while that the beloved monster stabbed him with long, curved swords, such as were worn by the Moors in pictures by Regnault.

CHAPTER VI

VERY early in the morning he awoke to a new world. So fresh was he, and so light of heart, that it was difficult to believe this attic bedroom was the same in which, feeling almost terrorised, he had fallen asleep. He could not lie in bed when early sunlight made the sky overhead all a wonderful blue hue like the inside of mussel-shells; so he rose, and departing along the corridor, stripped and plunged in cold water, and was dressed before the cook was stirring and creaking in her room. He looked out and saw how flat and long lay the shadows of the houses and their trees, what a drenched grey-green was the field along towards the river Cart—that field now built upon with houses. He marked the wet and glittering gravel before the house, the dewdrops on the drenched iron gate; and going downstairs he drew the chain, unlocked the door, went out. He was so eager for the hours to pass from now to afternoon, when (he was decided) he would run up to West Regent Street, that he must be doing something in them.

He climbed the hill to the upper end of Queen's Park. The gates were open, but not a person showed on the long, broad, rolled walk. The well-kept grass glowed wet, the clumps of well-ordered bushes stood dark and shining. A coil or two of smoke went up from chimneys here and there, round about. This part of Glasgow has altered during recent years; a great number of houses and streets have sprung up, and the vicinity is odorous of suburbia—papa and mamma, with a little reserve fund in the bank, the pretty girls singing in the choir, playing

tennis, being loved by the amusing young men with wide cuffs and well-groomed hair and ambitions in the city. But on this morning it had a rural air. A wall, sweeping round the semicircle of one of the branching roads, showed a door in it that was fascinating pictorially. Round the corner were little cottages. One was a kind of meagre shop. It had bottles of peppermint balls in one of the windows, boxes of bar chocolate, and when the door was opened by little children, who stretched up one hand to the handle and in the other clutched two farthings, the bell sprung wildly. The "Monument" had not been erected, the Christian Endeavour Societies of the neighbouring churches had not yet begun to use the bit of open hilltop space as a Sunday evening plinth for their harangues to the strolling young people in picture hats, or with whangee canes.

There was a feeling of having come to the end of Glasgow there, in the recent and yet how far-off days of this part of our story—a sense as of Keats's line: "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill." The sensation that was wont to come to the sensitive pedestrian, passing from the city by this hill-road, was that if he could just stand a trifle higher, and look over the garden walls round about, all the vast open country that rolls south of Glasgow, clear up to the moors of Ayrshire, and upper Renfrewshire, would be open to his gaze. The branching roads, at this hilltop, held the lure of country travel. On this clear and sparkling morning, when the only signs of humanity being astir were the pillars of blue smoke, the call was very dear to Martin as he gained his first wind, cresting the hill. He turned the corner and took the road to Mill-brae, past a quiet road of pleasant houses that looked out on a farm. Somebody clattered with a pail in the stables; there was the hissing of an unseen man grooming a horse. In the paddock a rooster strutted

and suddenly flapping his wings crowed vigorously. The sun showed its top half, a segment of gold shield, over a garden wall. It was like a Caldecott rooster—a Caldecott sunrise.

Martin laughed at the vigour of the crow, and swung into his stride, passed the dotted houses of solid and grim deportment that stood behind low walls, or behind high railings that were backed by trim laurel hedges, came on to the steep "brae" or hill, and swung down it with the stones flying from his feet. Mill-brae was a quaint little place then. It had the air of a terrace and a house or two lifted from the West End and set down here within earshot of the chirr of reaping machines and corn-crakes. The "cycle track" road, as it is locally called, was not yet made on the city side of the stream. That was private property. Beyond river Cart were fields and hedges (looking low and flat, this early morning, under the high white clouds) and one or two farms, set well back from the road, showing wedges of sun and shadow on roofs and gables.

It was pleasant for more reasons than one to be out thus early in the morning glory. Beyond the river, that made a really final border line, dividing country from little bits of town and country mixed, he overtook lumbering carts that were crawling out to Giffnock Quarries. The drivers, rough-coated, wearing black and white shepherd-tartan mufflers, caps sagging over their eyes, lolling sleepy in the rattling square two-wheeled carts, gave him a nod as he made up on them, and bellowed: "Fine mornin'!" Obviously he belonged to a different class; but in that morning air they hailed each other easily. Martin must have been up, like them, even before the sun. On he posted, turning neither to left nor right, excepting where the road bent round slightly when, had it continued, it would have led to a large gate

in a wall. After swerving here the road led between walls for a little way, high upon the left hand, hiding the garden of a house, low wall upon the other, allowing the passer-by to range his gaze through long vistas of wood. Then came fields again, and beyond them the unkempt tops of the quarry lands showed, barren lands of outcropping rock and deep dust, tangled wild bushes and tufted dry grass—a region that had been to Martin at one time the Bad Lands of Dakota (the *Mauvaise Terre* of the old dolphined atlas at home), where he, a white renegade, lived among the hostile Sioux who took refuge there; and at another time, more recent, as he developed and discovered, had been to him part of "the forest ground called Thessaly."

The little coppice by the roadside, just before the quarry road turns off to the left, still held—held what? It could not be called shadow; it could not be called the last of the night. It seemed rather an atmosphere—a sense—a presence—of intense peace. Perhaps the entrance of the sun-rays into the wood had much to do with giving that impression; they stretched into it so nearly level that the leafy floor was lit only in those parts where it rose slightly, while the soaring tree-stems overhead were dappled and splashed with sun, a pale, washed gold. But the best explanations of such experiences are no explanations; and with the spiritual, as with the temporal, with moods of the spirit as with conditions of the physique, behind the last explanation is the mystery which turns the explanation into mere evasion. There was a great sound of rooks in the Merrylee woods away behind; a lark was already up in the tender blue dazzle overhead. From far away, perhaps from the farm out of sight up the quarry road, came a sound of hammering, every tap doubled in an echo. Sparrows chirped and darted.

It was so quiet that Martin, standing there, enjoying, motionless as a tree, could hear the rat-a-tat of milk-carts tittuping to Glasgow on the Kilmarnock road—a broad, purposeful-looking road into which this rambling lane, upon which he had been walking, eventually led, though they were here held apart by a triangle or wedge of wilderness and deserted quarry holes; for there is a kind of delta of roads where the Kilmarnock road draws near to Glasgow. He could hear the milk-carts, with their cans rat-a-tatting maybe over half a mile away. Also there was a sound, very slow and very deliberate, as of a giant breathing—the sound of a pump in the great workings beyond the hill to left. There came the tip-tap, tip-tap again of the far-off hammering—the rattle of the distant milk-carts died away; a blackbird trilled and half flew, half scuttled through the wood.

Martin was in a quiet ecstasy, or a quiet ecstasy was in him. He knew, knew deeply and tremendously, that he was alive, and that all this early sunlight, and these drifting blue shadows, were his, this thin washed air, this blackbird song, this flitting and perching of endless sparrows that showed colours invisible in their city brothers. Ha! If he really grew tired of Glassford Street, of the smell of flannelettes, fancy goods, shirtings, winceys—and how they did sickenly smell on damp days! —he would leave home and join a band of gipsies! There were still real gipsies to be seen occasionally on the roads here—not mere tramps, lodging-house tramps who fawned or intimidated as occasion advised. No—he would. . . .

A change in the air, or in the quality of the light, told him he had better turn. The preliminaries of day were over. It was not *early morning* now; it was morning; it would soon be forenoon. Two horses went swing-swinging up a hill to left as he returned, a squat boy

stumbling after them in the new-turned furrows. "Haw! Gee! Whoa—vein!" came the ploughboy's voice on the wind. The team showed on the crest in a picture that appeals to the artist and the Christmas plate painter alike, to gods, to madmen, and idiots, to supermen and simple souls. A long sprig in the hedge, soaring above its neighbours, lured him to cut it for a switch to wave and beat out tunes with in air as he marched home. But he discarded it at Mill-brae, becoming self-conscious there, because of three pretty girls in a window, waiting for breakfast, who stood with the curtains held back, bending and coming erect in peals of laughter. He looked down to see if his waistcoat buttons were undone that they should be so amused at him. No, the buttons were all right. They nudged and laughed again; they showed their pretty teeth in merriment. He looked at his boots. They were redly coated with earth. Perhaps they were only laughing at his dirty boots. At any rate they made him self-conscious. The ecstasy of the morning would have to be treated as a secret. If the three had asked him: "What went you out for to see?" he would have been tongue-tied! Too sensitive! Too sensitive! Wilson was right.

As he came again to Queensholme, opened the gate, and swung up the short "chucky"-strewn drive, he saw the white tablecloth on the dining-room table, caught the flutter of Mary's apron as she set the table. He hastened upstairs, had washed again, and was fumbling with his necktie, trying to tie an ordinary tie in the way that Fortuny had tied his, when the gong rang below, a gentle note as of soft pliable metal. Breakfast and business called. The ordinary sailor-knot would have to serve. No, it wouldn't. There! He got it something like Fortuny's and went down to breakfast. His father was already at the table.

"Hullo! Been out?" said Mr. Moir.

"Yes rather."

"Where to this morning?"

"As far as the Giffnock quarry road."

"Ah ha! You'll have an appetite."

"Well, Martin!"

He turned to his mother.

"Good morning, mother."

She was pleased that he had been out thus early, for of late he had worried her. He was in the period between boyhood and manhood, and she was doubtful of him. Often, often she wanted to know what he was thinking about—what was inside his head. She had been worried last night over his unusual excitement. Of late she had been attending a "drawing-room" held in Kelvinside by an old friend. It was a serious drawing-room. Instead of just chatting, and sipping a cup of tea, and spending thereat ten minutes to a quarter of an hour, somebody arrived who "said a few words." She had heard, there, most alarming and serious matters. To Mrs. Smith-Smythe (the woman of this drawing-room) might well have been said as to the sick king of Bokhara:

> ". . . all the earth round,
> If a man bear to have it so,
> Things which might vex him shall be found."

Now a frock-coated Armenian, with a fez under his chair, told them of massacres at some place that they really must look up on the map when they got home, and invariably failed to look up, being "too busy." Again, a gentle olive lady—and "Oh, what exquisite silk the scarf is that you wear over your head! Now, is that made in Rajpootana?"—told of how once widows were burnt, but no! not now. Or a nasal man from Newfoundland caused them to shudder with descriptions of how cod-

fishers got sea-boils on their hands, and sometimes were poisoned by fish-bones. One old lady had recently spoken three days in succession—a fat lady, with three chins, and little piercing eyes. Her aim was to enlist their sympathy upon behalf of purity; and she told them many scandalous stories. She had greatly perturbed Mrs. Moir. She had made Mrs. Moir feel what a frightful time was the time of puberty with young men. It had never occurred to her before, but now she was worried. It was for mothers to train their boys, to keep an eye on them, to show them their duty to the State, to implant within them a sense of the sacredness of the bodies, as well as of the souls, of women—and the little fat woman had nodded her head gravely, and looked at them over her spectacles in a way that caused the three chins to make four for a moment.

Now Mrs. Moir was secretive about these meetings; not secretive about attending them, but about all she heard there. She was as secretive about these chats over Indian tea as was Martin about his afternoon reveries over Russian tea in the other-worldly peace of Cranston's smoke-room in Ingram Street, nigh unto Virginia Street. While Martin sat beaming over the devilled kidneys and toast, and looking forward to seeing Wilson's studio—wondering if it would be like Fortuny's, or like Monet's—she was wondering what his thoughts might be. Was it possible that her son, perhaps, was brooding over some simple and innocent waitress in the restaurant where he lunched? The stout person had told them a terrible story of a waitress. It had filled them all with shudders and creeps, and caused them to steal home wondering what was going on behind every drawn blind. She looked at Martin now and said:

"Martin, were you with Mr. Barker all the time last night?"

Mr. Moir was looking at the *Herald* just delivered, and feeling round it for his fork on which was a piece of kidney.

"Oh—another fellow came in, and I yarned with him —Wilson—you remember, he used to be at the Grammar School." He paused and considered. Yes, he would tell all about him, and if it led to trouble he would go and join the gipsies! "He's an artist. He has a studio. I'm to go up and see him."

"You said nothing about him last night. Where did you meet him?"

"At the restaurant with Mr. Barker. We had heaps to talk about. We would have stayed longer, but I thought you would be worrying. He's invited me up to his studio. I say, dad, could I get off for an hour this afternoon?"

"Where is this studio?" asked Mrs. Moir.

"What did you say, mother? Oh, where? Seventy-five West Regent Street," he said, feeling happier for being open and daring about it! "Three stairs up, and the name's on the jaw-box," he added with a chuckle.

His father gave a gulp and laughed.

"What a phrase!" cried Mrs. Moir. "Where did you learn that? If this boy Wilson——"

"Oh, he heard *that* in the warehouse," said her husband.

"Well, then, he should remember that he is not just an ordinary warehouseman," she said. "It is the business he has to learn, not the vulgarities of——"

"That's all right, my dear! You're too touchy, my dear! I like to hear the boys, but I don't get much chance. The warehouse is full of these phrases. I say, Martin, did you hear that absurd one?—I heard young What's his name, in the Shirtings, saying to Jones of the Fancies, the dandy, you know——"

"I know—an awful ass. He talks about clocked socks and the shirts he buys as if he was a girl."

Mrs. Moir ruffled. Here was disrespect to women.

"Does he? I can believe it—a niminy youth. I heard that Shirtings boy say to him: 'I see that's not your other tie you have on to-day!' Ab-surd!"

"Yes, I know that," said Martin. "The answer is: 'No, this is my high-tiddly-tie I have on to-day.'"

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer!" But Ebenezer was choking over his roll. It was evident that, as the half-hour chat lady assured them, men were just children; we must not expect too much—but often, ah too often, they are just bad little boys.

"Oh, my dear," said Mr. Moir. "This is all harmless. It's all right. I like to hear the boys. They are of the soil—or I should say of The Warehouses. Hang it all, my dear, they give that feeling of *chez moi*. They're the local colour. They're part of the life and fun that helps the day along."

"I think they are merely vulgar," she answered.

"We *are* vulgar, my dear, we *are* vulgar. We are vulgar in the neighbourhood of Ingram Street and Argyle Street. But we have hearts. We cock our hats and wear—" He began to laugh again. "I say, Martin, that fellow Archie is *the* thing, isn't he, with his hat on the back of his head, scratching his leg behind the knee? When I forget thee, Ingram Street—what is it the Psalmist says? Oh yes—may my right hand forget how to range the samples! Ha! Ha!"

Mrs. Moir fell silent. She was of the Colintrae Sinclairs, don't you know? Martin felt oddly moved in his heart, and he sat staring at his father with big eyes, almost devoted-looking. He was sorry he had destroyed all his drawings, for there was a drawing of Archie, just

as his father had touched him in now with words. He had burnt it on that sad night of dejection.

"Ah well! What's the hour? Business, business. Come along, Martin."

"Better arrange your necktie before you start off for business," said Mrs. Moir. "It looks very slovenly."

It was the season when Canadian buyers began to appear in Glasgow, and drift amiably from warehouse to warehouse, seeing what was for sale; full of meditation, feeling this cloth, feeling the other; considering, wandering round; going out for lunch, saying they would "look in again," keeping heads of departments close to the door, causing them to leave word, when they went out, of where they were to be found should they be wanted.

One of these, without going into the counting-house to ask for Mr. Moir, as the usage was, came strolling placidly into the warehouse about one o'clock, when most of the men were out. He was promptly recognised by a junior, who hastened off to find Beveridge in his chosen restaurant, and whisper news of the arrival in his ear, so that he countermanded his lunch coffee for the time being and hurried back to Glassford Street.

The Canadian walked into the Wincey department and looked up at the piles of goods like a Breton considering the Eiffel Tower. His was a face on which opinion touched lightly; he had control of the facial muscles. He had the square Pepsin jaw, puckered eyes, and occupied his large, soft hands in toying with a toothpick, making little clicking sounds with it as he sauntered this way and that, eyeing the stock. Martin, seeing him advance thus into the Winceys, came down from his desk, where he was not "skitchin'," but dreaming, dreaming of studios and artists.

"How do you do, young man? Are you in charge of

this dee-partment?" asked the Canadian, when Martin came within the odour of cigars.

"I am, sir. Can I do something for you?"

"Oh, I don't know. Everybody at lunch, I suppose?"

"A good many are out. The head of this department is not in at present. But perhaps I can show you what you want?"

"I can see, I can see. I'm in no hurry." He wandered here and there, Martin close at hand, then turned and produced a card. "That is my card," he said.

"Oh, yes," Martin answered. "Very pleased to see you. Did you have a pleasant crossing?"

The Canadian turned more fully and considered the young man, smiling.

"Very pleasant, thank you. Little fog, little ice; some poker, re-cited, as usual, 'Excelsior,' at the Concert given by passengers in aid of Seamen's Widows. Quite a normal passage—thank *you*."

He said all this, after the first brief, piercing glance at Martin, as if to a pile of goods. And then, having spoken, he turned again, and looked sharply and twinkling at Martin to see if that young man appreciated him. Martin showed puckers around his mouth, wore an expression of smiling but courteous interest in this visitor. The buyer was indeed, as he would have said, "feeling good." Presently he drew from his pocket a little notebook, and: "Say," he said, "you could show me some few pieces, I think," and began to voice his wants. Martin dragged piece after piece to light and laid it on the counter. On went the buyer with requests for more, even after he had evidently exhausted his notes. The counter was soon piled high with various qualities and shades of wincey.

"Yes," he said to himself, "yes; curious—but I've come across it before."

Martin did not understand.

"I noticed it by your doubt once or twice—you had to look at the ticket to make sure, and yet the light is quite good enough to see without having to do that. That last lot I asked for were all tests. Young man, you are de-ficient in your sense of colour. You are wasting your time in this ee-stablishment. I shall say nothing to the pro-prietor, of course, nor to your dee-partment head, but I should advise you to do so. You are colour-blind—nominally, you understand me? Don't misunderstand me. Nominally. You cannot—if I may use the phrase in this sense—always see red."

"I think I—" began Martin.

"Oh yes, of course you can see red when it is in a certain relation to other colours," said the buyer. "I reckon you could see a bottle of red ink, too. But a scarlet thread such as I asked you for just now, might be brown, so far as you are aware. You could see—let me see what you could see; yap," with definiteness, "you could see a red tag such as they stick on pictures in the picture-shows, signifying sold; you could see the red of blood on a cut, but you would miss the red berries on a tree if the light didn't catch them just so. The reflections of the green on to them would sink the red for you, I reckon. Yes. I'll raise you farther—I guarantee that you would show me some shades of pink that you would tell me were blue. Of course, don't take my word for it. But I suggest you get this verified by an oculist, and then pull out of this line of business. You could get on in it by ability and so forth, but you would always have annoyance over some fancy shades. I don't know if you would do for a locomotive engineer! I surmise that in certain conditions of atmosphere you couldn't tell a green light from a red, unless you saw them together. You'll have to look at the tags in certain combinations with scarlet all your days—and if the tag has fallen off

you're liable to come to my opinion eventually and wish you had pulled out of soft goods earlier in life. For a man in this country can't move around from one line to another, the way we can do in Canada. We value varied experience, and appreciate the capacity for picking up things. The Old Country values specialised knowledge."

But at this MacDougall arrived. The two men shook hands warmly, Charlie peering at the Canadian's brows to show his directness, the Canadian smiling as if almost amused at Charlie's effusion.

"Your assistant has been looking after me to perfection, Mr. MacDougall," he said. "I think there is little more to do in your dee-partment except to shake hands with you, and I feel that I have done that," he added, nursing his right hand in his left. "You have a grip like a lumber-jack."

Presently he strolled on to the Flannelettes, leaving MacDougall and Martin to rearrange the disturbed stacks. Martin was in an odd state of mind. He felt that he should be gazing out on the world with horror over the discovery of his visual defect; but he was not. He was heedless, stonily heedless. He had liked the man who discovered, and announced the discovery, of his lack. He had him still in his eye, as it were—kept considering his contour, his large bulk, his whimsical and friendly pomposity, his air of the paternal, part humbugging, part shrewd, part innocent. It did not occur to him that the man might be wrong—for at mention of examination of the tag to verify the cloth's colour, he had thought: "Yes, I have to do that often, especially when there is scarlet in the weft." So he believed that the charge was true. But he remained unmoved. He was unmoved because of a thought in his mind—a thought that he refused to consider, kept crushing down, the thought that

this settled the Art question. But it persisted: how was a colour-blind man to be an artist? Rather than consider that point he centred his mind on another facet of the exposure. It settled the question of designing cloth, that for certain; and probably also settled the question of being a manufacturer.

He went to his father's room after closing time that evening. Mr. Moir had been out with the affable Canadian buyer, and had just returned alone. Martin told him all, and he listened with heavy face, lips twisting and puckering. Then he heaved a big sigh, opened a drawer, and taking out a heap of yarns and spools, tossed them onto his table.

"Range these," he said, "the way you have seen them ranging in the Fancy Department. I've noticed you looking at them sometimes, though you get none of that to do in the Winceys."

Martin ranged the spools in order, colours and shades, his father watching. Then he looked at Mr. Moir, but found him expressionless.

"We'd better get this settled," said his father grimly. "Look here—we'll go to a good man. Let me see—yes, come along. Get ready to go, Martin, my boy. We'll go up and see Professor Earle. I don't know what his hours are; but this is a queer thing. I've never come across it before. It will cut your mother up too. She was saying, only last night, that she hoped you would stick to the business with interest."

But when they arrived at Professor Earle's house he was out. They left word that they would call in the morning in the hope of seeing him, and went home, both rather quiet, only now and then Mr. Moir pausing to ask: "What colour is that?" sometimes seeming at once relieved at Martin's reply, sometimes looking a second time at the colour under consideration and saying: "Well

—yes, so it is—in a way. Huh! This is very droll—when one begins to look at colours in this way!''

Over the dinner-table at Queensholme Mrs. Moir listened, with unconcealed scepticism, to the whole story of the defect. She even had Martin up to look at dresses in her wardrobe, at balls of wool; she led him from room to room, with the carpets in each for examination papers. She puzzled herself, momentarily at times; she puzzled him often. He began to feel the uncertainty in himself that the flogging masters at the Grammar School used to put into him when they asked questions with the strap of castigation in hand ready to come down thwack if a faulty answer were given.

At last she said: ''We'll see to-morrow. I'm glad you did not find Doctor Earle at home to-night. I want to be present when he examines you.'' She looked at Martin keenly. ''This Canadian buyer did not say a word to your father about it?''

''No, he said he wouldn't,'' Martin answered, and repeated the buyer's words. ''He seemed a jolly decent sort.''

''Um!'' said Mrs. Moir.

Why, he wondered, was there something of threat in his mother's remark that she would come with him? But that he only pondered briefly. For the deeper thought held him now. What about Art—if he was colour-blind? Nobody would ever believe that he could draw. Wilson had said he could. Wilson! He was to have gone to his studio to-day! How deep his anguish had been over the discovery, or alleged discovery, of the eye defect, may be gauged by the fact that he had forgotten all about the promised visit to Wilson's studio.

CHAPTER VII

Mrs. Moir had very definite reasons for wishing to be the one to accompany Martin to the oculist's. She considered that her husband was altogether too easily gulled, and also that he lacked a right sense of fatherhood. Many incidents had conspired to convince her in this view since the day when Mr. Moir first sided with his son in argument against her. Though not religious, she believed in bringing up children with some knowledge of Scripture, and was wont every evening to cause her boys to learn a text of Holy Writ. One evening she had quoted to Martin, and told him to repeat after her: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee."

"But if I don't honour them God will know," said the annoying child. "And He wouldn't give me long days upon the land just because I said I honoured them."

She had stared coldly at him, but his father had set down *The Voyage of the Challenger* which he was reading, and smiled.

"You must not say that!" Mrs. Moir had commanded.

"Logical!" broke in her husband.

"Disrespectful!" said Mrs. Moir.

"Not to God, at any rate," was Mr. Moir's rejoinder, with a chuckle. "The remark shows a fairly exalted view of the Deity, such as you try to inculcate."

"And if you weren't honourable, mother, how could I honour you?" persisted Martin.

Mrs. Moir had taken this with gravity, Mr. Moir with a burst of laughter. He had clapped Martin's shoulder

and said: "There, there, boy, go to bed—and don't worry!" but Mrs. Moir had refused to give her usual good-night kiss; and the misery of the lack of that wiped out the pleasure at the father's friendliness, and the bedward stairs seemed dismal to the boy.

Mrs. Moir recalled the scene now, and others like it—recalled, with revival of the old indignation, her husband's gentle admonition: "My dear, I don't think you should teach him texts like that. These things are really our look out." She felt that it would break her heart if this, her younger son, were found out in an attempt to delude his parents, after all their thought for him—or *her* thought at least. But she could not leave it to Mr. Moir to verify the truth. He was too easily gulled; she must be present at the examination. Would that she could shut her eyes to the facts, would that her mother's love might not be hurt—and yet how could she be aught but suspicious of this story of colour-blindness.

"Will that Canadian buyer be in again?" she asked her husband across the breakfast-table.

"I expect so. Why?"

"Could you not ask him about this colour-blindness?"

Martin looked from one to the other.

"He won't know more than the oculist," replied Mr. Moir; "and we've seen already that there is something in it, enough to necessitate knowing definitely where he stands regarding his eyes."

"Well, I would speak to the buyer if I were you," she said. "He seems—from Martin's story—rather well up in the subject."

"Oh, I may, I may, if we are chatting—now that Martin has mentioned it to me. But he's going to see Professor Earle; that will be definite—as good advice as we can procure."

"Yes, that will be definite," she agreed, and her man-

ner was frigid. "It is very funny not to be completely colour-blind—just not to see one colour."

She was in the same dry humour after she had prepared to accompany him, and Martin felt it weigh upon him. How he wished that she would not have that air of proprietorship over him. Last night he had *gone with* his father to the oculist's house; this morning his mother *took him* thither. That was how he felt—ignominious. When they got out of the train at Central Station they boarded a car for Charing Cross, and Mrs. Moir paid the fare, kept both tickets, sticking them in her purse. His father had handed him one ticket on the previous night. This was a trifle, nothing at all. It was only the sense of contrast, already awakened, that made him feel it too. She was so erect, so hard of eye. She seemed watching him. In the car trundling along Bothwell Street he was alert for the posters, and she had an eye on him, an eye that grew more stern. Two girls opposite, expensively dressed, girls who seemed constantly looking to see if their bracelets had not come undone, if their high-buttoned boots were not losing polish, ever and again whispering, their heads very buoyant, making their feathers dance, looked at the mother and son, nudged and giggled. Martin looked at them. They wore the appearance of trying not to laugh, and he must needs not only think they were laughing at his mother, but be infuriated that they laughed. He blushed angrily. The girls exchanged words, looked at him, laughed again, and drew Mrs. Moir's interest. She turned to her son and found him thus flushed and apparently highly self-conscious. She looked at the girls, saw that they were very pretty, glanced at their clothes. The car stopped and they alighted.

"What were you sitting staring at those two girls for?" she said.

"They were laughing—I thought they were laughing at you——"

Mrs. Moir gazed at her son thoughtfully, and pondered, with a sense of terror, on the age of puberty as described by the lady of the "few words" at the Kelvinside At-home.

"Which is the house?" she asked.

"Here it is."

They mounted the steps, Mrs. Moir rang the bell, and anon they were waiting in a quiet room with a charming convex mirror on one wall to atone for the engravings after Watts on the others. The convex mirror charmed Martin, with the fascinating miniature it offered of the room. He had to rise and move about before it to see all the various effects.

"Martin! Martin! What *are* you doing? I never saw such an exhibition of egoism!"

"Egoism" instead of "conceit" tempered the remark to him, and he was able to say: "Do look at this mirror, mother. Do look how the room is turned into a picture in it."

"But, my dear, have you never seen a mirror like that before?"

"Will you come, please?" said a voice at the door.

Professor Earle was an elderly, venerable man, with lank face, silver hair, kindly eyes, and a rasping voice. Mrs. Moir began:

"I have brought my son to see you. He is in the soft goods business, and yesterday, he tells me, he had it pointed out to him that he was colour-blind——"

"Yes, yes!"

"A Canadian who was in the warehouse told him that he could not see red."

Professor Earle beamed.

"A Canadian?" he asked, cocking his head on one

side. "Now what is the significance, in that, to which I am blind?"

"Oh, I just mentioned it—er——" Mrs. Moir thought Professor Earle either rude or childish. After all, he was going to take a fee for this! "He was told he could not see red."

"Ah! Yes, yes! Curious, that phrase. They talk, I believe, in Canada—or the west of Canada, at any rate —of 'painting a town red.' Interesting! Interesting phrase. We have it in Dante, you may remember, madam"— Mrs. Moir was slightly flurried—"'We are they who painted the world red with our sins.' Yes, yes. Now! How old are you, young man?"

"Seventeen." He was afraid that, this morning, he must look more like seven!

"Ah well, you are not dumb! I was afraid you were. Just come over here"; and Professor Earle withdrew a heap of coloured wools from a drawer and cast them down on a table in the window recess. Martin felt that he was about to look on at something. That was the feeling. He felt most impersonal, and he was interested to note that Martin Moir was delighted with the display of colours.

"Tell me the names of these," said the oculist.

Martin began to make order out of the heap.

"Red—yellow—blue—grey—brown——" He felt his mother start behind him. She was there, looking.

"Tut-tut-tut!" said Professor Earle to her, over his shoulder.

"Brown," repeated Martin, "but with a lot of red in it."

"Now why did you say that? Why did you make that addendum?"

Martin laughed. He liked Professor Earle.

"Because my mother started," he said, laughing.

"I believe it is *names* not *colours* that he is weak on," Mrs. Moir interjected.

"You hear that?" asked the oculist. "Your mother believes you are trying to make an interesting case of yourself. Well, we shall see. Go on."

"Brown—blue—yellow—(a pause)—blue——"

"Shaky about that, eh?"

"Is it blue?" asked Martin, looking at Professor Earle.

"No, it is pink."

So on it went.

"Very interesting, is it not?" said Professor Earle to Mrs. Moir when all the experiment was over, and Martin's doubt of certain shades containing red was clearly shown.

She seemed dubious.

"Yes," she said slowly, with a drawl of doubt. "But it may still be names. You observe that he pauses before giving the wrong names——"

"Well! We shall see." Then to Martin: "Do you arrange samples—patterns?"

"Not in my department, but I have seen it done."

Earle took up a selected handful of spools of wool.

"Range these," he said.

"Oh—you have——" began Mrs. Moir, but Professor Earle said: "Tu-tu-tut!" almost vindictively to her. It was very cruel, she thought. This old, proud-looking man who did not know her anxiety over her son, her *own* son, who was to be a manufacturer. Martin ranged from light blue to dark blue, but at the top of the dark blues he set down a purple spool that the oculist had given him (not inadvertently) in the heap, and at the other end, he set down, two places up (esteeming it as a blue not so light as his lightest), an undoubted pink.

Professor Earle turned to Mrs. Moir and spread his hands like a conjurer after a display.

"I ne-never knew," she said, and her voice quavered.

"Look!" He held up a card with red spots on it. "How many spots?"

Martin counted and replied.

"Right."

"Oh, he *can* see red!" cried Mrs. Moir, thinking that Martin had been taken off his guard.

"Quite so!" said the oculist. "Now let me show you something else." He took out more yarns from the pile and cast them down. "Range these."

They were delightful colours—purples of sunrises, purples of irises. Martin ranged the purples easily; and very easily, in among the dark purples, he put a deep blue.

"Now!" said Professor Earle. "There you are!"

"What can be done?" asked Mrs. Moir, convinced at last.

"Nothing. Take him out of that business. It is not fair to him in these days of competition. What do you *want* to be, my boy?"

"I wanted to be—" he smiled a distorted smile, he waited for the laughter of contempt, "an artist!" he said.

"Poor boy! You can't be that now. Poor, poor boy!" said his mother, and her eyes were awash with real tears.

"Tu-tu-tut!" said Earle. "Stranger things have happened. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, as the psalmist Sterne says," and he beamed on the mother. Her handkerchief was at her eyes; he clapped her shoulder and repeated his "tu-tu-tut!" "Your boy may be another Michael Angelo. When The First Cause, my dear lady, does not let a young man see red, it often gives

him a sense of form. I am not surprised that he wants to be an artist, not at all. Nothing surprises me. I am an old man, and even surprising things—which this is not—do not surprise me! And you must remember that if he does not see red the way that you and I do he does not see a *hole* where red is; he sees something. And you will observe that he knows it is——" He broke off, for the tears came flooding in Mrs. Moir's eyes. "Why, he might make a name for himself as the Artist for the Colour Blind!" he said, hoping by the jocular word to close her lachrymatory valves.

She laughed and gulped, laughed again.

When they left the oculist's house Mrs. Moir felt very greatly broken. But Martin was oddly happy.

"Your father will want to know," she said. "We had better go down and tell him."

No car coming down Elmbank Street while they waited, they walked up to Sauchiehall Street, and took tickets from Charing Cross to Gordon Street. But a block in the traffic at the turning into Renfield Street made Mrs. Moir rise and bid Martin to "Come along"; there was a line of stationary cars, one after the other, all the way to the foot of the hill; it would be as quick to walk now, cutting across to George Square. Before a little shop window, as they came down from Renfield Street corner toward Queen Street Station, she suddenly stopped. She looked into the window with, at first an expression of doubt in her own vision, then with expression of grim exultation. It was a little shop that sold bundles of cigarettes, bundles tied round with tape, black cigarettes from Havana, fat and flat cigarettes from Algiers, clay-pipes with faces shaped on the bowls, weird tobacco jars, newspapers, home and foreign, French, Spanish. What arrested Mrs. Moir was an envelope with the words thereon: "The Grecian Bend—

For men only. Price Two Pence.'' Martin looked at his mother, at the envelope that so markedly enthralled her, at his mother again. Something had come into her eyes, such as he had seen once in the eyes of a woman at Glasgow Green who was standing on a barrel, screaming and calling: ''Friends! The Blood of Jesus! I say to you—all ye who pass by—the Blood of Jesus! As you all walk past me smiling and content, I say to you now is the appointed time, now is the day of Salvation. Remember, friends who pass by. The Blood of Jesus!'' The face of this poor person (whose unconscious mockery of the Christ was almost as bad as the other mockery of Christ—that of the Church) had haunted him for weeks. His mother's face (recalling that one) now appalled him similarly, and more keenly—because this was his mother. He wanted to clutch her, to hold her back, but she had gone into the shop. He followed and stood in the doorway.

The man inside set down his pipe. Never had a lady of nearly forty, in rustling raiment, come in and looked at him so fixedly.

''Yes'm?'' he said.

''Give me that envelope on which are the words: 'The Grecian Bend—For men only. Two Pence'.''

''Yes'm,'' he said, looking ready to protect his eyes from the scratches of a maniac, if necessary.

She was chagrined that he made no objection to serving her. She had imagined herself on the trail of something —on the point of uncovering something to report to the ladies of the Kelvinside Purity League. When she had the envelope indubitably in her hand, and had laid down the twopence on the counter: ''Why,'' she asked, in tones of iron, ''does it say on it 'For men only'?''

''Oh, I don't know, ma'am, unless to play upon curiosity. We sell an awful lot to both men and weemen

—maistly weemen. I suppose it's the same principle as makes books denounced from the pulpit such a success at the libraries. Whiles," he added slowly, seeing that she was at least not raving mad, "whiles, ma'am, the readers are highly disappointed."

She went out with pursed lips, and they walked on, she gripping the envelope. In George Square, crossing the big spaces of pavement, she slowed down and opened the envelope, first making sure that no one was near on either hand to observe. She withdrew a paper, studied it thoughtfully, and then, laughing, handed it to Martin.

"That's quite amusing," she said. "You see it is a little pictorial jest at the changing fashions."

Martin found it not highly entertaining—a series of drawings, by no master hand, showing the coming and going of the crinoline, the advent, exaggeration, diminution of the bustle. He handed it back without saying anything; he wondered why his mother had bought it, and, though unable to explain his feelings even to himself, he was in a kind of terror of her. There had been something in her manner, until she offered him the envelope, that made him the prey of an inexplicable wish to run away from her! She looked at the paper that he handed back.

"I'm a silly old woman," she said. "I'm a silly old fool. Oh dear, oh dear, Martin. I'm afraid your mother is a fool. Take care of this crossing, Martin; I'm always so timid about it. Help your old mother across now; look out for the traffic."

Puzzled, he took her arm, the way he had seen his father do, to convoy her across. They came to the pavement on the south side.

"Purity League! Rubbish!" she said. Three garish women went past, the nearest one bumping into her,

although Martin had fallen behind to give them full share of the pavement.

"What did you say, mother?" he asked.

"Did I speak? I didn't notice, my dear."

When they arrived at Glassford Street they were told that Mr. Moir was out, but would be back in half an hour. The cashier wanted Mrs. Moir to go in and wait.

"No—we'll come back. We'll have a cup of tea, Martin," said she. "Do you know a tea-shop near here?"

"Um—er—yes, I know a rather decent one," said he.

He conveyed her to his own especial tea-room, but not, of course, to the underground part. Nor did he mention that, below her feet, was a place more sacred to him than a church, with an odour of smoke more excellent than smoke of incense; and after they were seated he leant across the table and said, finding her ever so much more comprehensible now than she had been when inquiring into "The Grecian Bend—For men only—price Two Pence": "I say, mother, isn't that an awfully pretty girl in the desk? You can just see her face through the hole for paying."

She trilled a little laugh.

"Well, my young man! You have an eye for beauty as well as tea-shops," she said, shook a finger playfully at him, turned to peep at the girl in question; then turned back again and smiled at him. "She is a pretty girl, a sensible looking girl too, but——" and she held up her finger once more, as if playfully admonishing, and held her head sidewise, coyly. Martin had never seen her like this before.

Presently, feeling too warm, she stood up to loosen her cloak, and he jumped to his feet to help her. She looked on him with the sweetest smile imaginable. She was strangely excited and fluttery.

"I think you would look awfully nice in one of these crinolines, mother, and with that hat like a coal scuttle arching all round your face," he said, thinking of one of the figures in "The Grecian Bend."

"I *did*, my dear, I did," she said. "What nice cakes! I see you can get meals here, too," as she glanced at the menu card. "Is this where you come to lunch?"

"Generally."

He told her nothing of the room below. A communicative word about it was on his tongue, but something restrained him—some preventive impulse, which he acknowledged and followed. Then she lapsed back into meditation, puckering her eyes, looking into distance keenly, and considering. And it was not till they returned to Glassford Street, and found Mr. Moir, that Martin discovered the tenor of her deeper meditations.

CHAPTER VIII

"Well, what is the verdict?" asked Ebenezer Moir.

"He seems to be what is called colour-blind."

Mr. Moir tapped out a bar of a nebulous tune on his table and looked askance at his son.

"He says I could be an artist," Martin broke out.

Mr. Moir gave one tap of his foot.

Mrs. Moir smiled, putting Martin back into short trousers again. It had occurred to her, originally, when Martin and his father came home with the news of this defect of vision, that perhaps the boy was attempting a stratagem to escape from manufacturing. His insistence on the Canadian buyer's assertion that he was "colour-blind," but in one colour only, was, she had suspected, deep laid. If it was his intention to evade manufacturing by reason of that lack, and then to pursue art, he was making a foolish move. His guile was, she considered, altogether too naïve.

"Yes, the oculist was very sweet," she said, "when Martin said he had wanted to be an artist."

"Tried to let him down gently?" mumbled Mr. Moir.

"He really meant it!" said Martin eagerly. "He really meant that I might have all the more turn for form and line to balance the defect in colour-sense."

"I've been thinking," began his mother: "Why should he not learn the business side—I mean the counting house? You say yourself that if you could look after that as well as the warehouse——"

"Eh? Oh yes—just a minute," said Mr. Moir, pondering. "Does Earle not suggest any remedy?"

"No. He says there is none."

"I can see that the designing idea is all knocked on the head now," said Mr. Moir. "This lack would always be in the way—far more really in designing than in painting, funny though it sounds."

"Of course, that was always more or less a—well, a suggestion—till he should settle down," put in Mrs. Moir. Martin looked from one to the other; he felt a sense of horror.

"Not at all, not at all!" answered Mr. Moir definitely. "I really did look forward to him doing designing—it is a knock to me that it is useless to consider that. However! However!" he broke out in cheerful accent, suddenly bethinking that Martin might feel a "knock" too. "I saw Marks to-day—that's the Canadian buyer—and he says, very strongly, that in these days of competition——" But he let the sentence tail off, seeing that it led back to depressing issues. "Let me see now," he muttered, and sat scratching his head.

Suddenly Martin remembered his appointment of the previous day.

"I say, dad," he said anxiously, "I was to go up and see Wilson yesterday, but I didn't remember it till we got home at night—with all that trouble, and with going up to see Earle, and I was so—so pipped."

"Oh, you needn't go now," decreed Mrs. Moir. "You don't want to go visiting artists now."

"I promised to go up and see him——"

"But you don't want to make friends with artists now," she persisted.

Martin raised his head; he could not see rightly—there was a mist in the room.

"Eh, Gad! *He's* felt it, you know!" the father murmured. "Yes, you go, Martin; you go and see him—yes, yes. Don't object, my dear."

"Oh, anybody could play on your sym——" she began.

"Let him go, let him go," said her husband. "It can do no harm, and he must feel this. The boy feels it."

"Then we'll go up together," she said. "Perhaps by evening when you come home you may have some suggestion. I suggest——"

"Sit down, sit down, dear. You can't go up with him."

"Can't go!"

"No, no."

"His mother! I should think we could call together. He could surely take his moth——"

"Oh no, no, no! Let the boy go and see his friend by himself. He's not a child. This is absurd; you might as well expect him to demand to accompany you to a mothers' meeting. Off you go, Martin."

And off Martin went.

It was a good thing that no one was slowly mounting the winding stairs of 75 West Regent Street; a good thing that no one was coming slowly down reading a newspaper (as the manner of some is); for, had such been, were he the former he had surely been butted as by a goat from behind on all fours, or were he the latter assuredly had he shut up like a pocket knife; for Martin was striding wildly upward—two, three, four steps to a leap, on a tremendous run for the summit. He reached the third flight thus precipitately, then ascended inquiringly on the wooden stairs beyond. At their end was a corridor, and he paused, peered along it, for he heard a voice chanting:

"At the Cross, at the Cross,
Where I first saw the Light,
And the burden of my soul
Rolled away, rolled away.

It was there by faith
I received my sight,
And now I am happy
All the day, all the day!"

He must have come to the wrong address! He thought of turning away and going down to have another look at the number, when he heard the same voice carol: "By God, it's good! I know it's good! I know I'll think it's hellish to-morrow—but that's all right. Thank God I am an artist——" And then the refrain, sung more feelingly:

"It was there by faith
I received my sight,
And now I am happy
All the day, all the day!"

Martin stole along the corridor. On the first door he came to was painted the name "Robert Wilson," and he pressed the bell. It tingled inside; quick steps came in response. The door opened, and Wilson stood there.

"Ah! Enter!" he said.

Martin stepped in and took one comprehensive look. It was a workshop this, not a curio emporium.

"You do not keep appointments, old man," said Wilson, resting hands on hips to study his visitor.

"I couldn't yesterday. I was not able to get a minute all day. Oh, I say! I do like that head!"

"You do! I was at it when you arrived."

"What are the colours?" asked Martin.

"No colours. But that's a great compliment! It was that queer sense of colour in your sketch of the chess players that made me get on to this again. It's a black-and-white!"

"I wondered—I seemed to see colour in it. I've just been to an oculist. I'm colour-blind!" he fired off.

"Eh? But you asked me if that was in colour!"

"Well, I didn't know."

"But—I don't understand you. Who says you are colour-blind?"

"The oculist. I made some mistakes in colours of cloth yesterday in business—and so I was trotted off to Earle."

"Who's Earle?"

"The oculist!"

"Good man?"

"My father says he's one of the best in Glasgow."

"Never heard of him," said Wilson—and smiled. "That's the way they talk about us," he explained. "But it's dam cheek if we talk that way, eh? Cloth? Oh yes, you told me the other night—soft goods you call it."

"Yes."

"Soft goods is a quaint phrase, isn't it?"

"Perhaps it is."

"So," said Wilson, "an oculist told you that you were colour-blind! Now *I* told you the other night that you had colour in a pencil drawing. Why do you go to an oculist instead of to an artist to find out whether you are colour-blind? It's preposterous! I must put it in the book!"

Martin felt infinitely better.

"Sit down and tell me about it," said Wilson, and Martin sat down and told his story, Wilson listening with interest. After all was told, said Wilson: "You know I've often thought Anglo-Saxon makers of cloth must be colour-blind. I'm glad to hear it verified like this. One can forgive them. Only the Latins have colour in their cloths. But why didn't you bring your father to see me instead of letting him take you to an oculist? It's so well meant of him, of course, and so hopeless. Now

that you are colour-blind—certified colour-blind—you can chuck up manufacturing and go in for art."

"Oh, Wilson, don't jest! I may tell you that the oculist did say I might have an eye for form to compensate, but it was only to buck me up!" This was not the view he had expressed of Earle's words in Glassford Street. Perhaps he wanted more stimulus from Wilson and therefore spoke so, or perhaps, being now among pictures, he really did fear the worst, whereas, when in the odour of manufacturing, he had hoped for the best.

Wilson stared.

"How amazingly credulous you are!" he said. "You let these people kick you in the stomach, and then you are mawkishly grateful over the kind way they help you to a sitting posture. You must know yourself that you only need some instructions—the technicalities. And not too much either; you must beware! What you lack is what you could be told by any communicative artist who knows about his tools. And then—practice! I would say that now that your people consider you unfit to follow the family business, you could talk them over into giving you a show—they might give you till you're twenty-one—stump up to let you study art. That should appeal to them—majority, you know, give you till you are twenty-one to study art. The fees are nothing to a man like your pater. I expect he spends more per annum on cigars to give away to customers than your fees would be at any School of Art."

"It's no use," Martin replied. "I know when he looks in a certain way that it's hopeless."

"Has your mother any say? Couldn't you get her soft side?"

"I don't understand her," Martin said. "No—not but what the old lady cried at the oculist's."

"I thought you said your father——"

"Oh yes, yesterday. But to-day she went with me."

Wilson shook his head and made a sound as of pain.

"Are your people religious, or worldly?" he asked.

"More worldly, I think."

"Mine are religious—they think that there is joy in the presence of the angels over a boat-load of Sunday-trippers drowned, for their God is a jealous God. Religious Philistines are very bad. So are the worldly. There is very little difference really. Must get on! Success! Smile's *Self-Help!* They like to be able to say of their youngest boy that he is the youngest commercial traveller in Britain—or things like that. Sooner or later you've got to kick!"

"It's a queer thing," said Martin, speaking slowly, trying to express how he felt. "But I would like to get through without having to put up a fight."

"You've got to be a tremendous big man to do that," remarked Wilson, "for they are fighting against you all the time."

"You really mean that from what you've seen of my work——"

"Oh, be damned! Don't ask me for repetition. Listen, for the last time, listen to me, and believe me—I never flatter. A man came up here the other day and showed me some of his work. It was hellish. If I had flattered him I might have done myself good. Not me. I looked at the whole bunch—a portfolio full, and the portfolio had silver buckles. When I saw the silver buckles I thought——" and he shook his head. "They were, as I say, hellish. I didn't flatter him; I never flatter. I simply closed the silver-mounted portfolio and said: 'Ah! Do you ever think of trying Literature?' No, I don't believe in flattery—it's unkind. Tell me first—am I an artist?" He waved his hand round, indicating his walls; the bottoms of his walls, for his pictures were not hung,

but all leant, most of them frameless, against the wall round the floor.

"Rather!" said Martin.

"Am I a colourist?"

"Rather!"

"Well, allow me to tell you that you are a colourist of the kind that puts colour into black-and-whites! And there are not so very many of them, my friend, that you should lightly allow your number to be called without answering. That was one of the first things that struck me the other night. It was so good, so full of colour, that thing you showed me, that I said nothing about it; it didn't seem necessary. I took it you knew *that*. Now that you tell me of this defect—this charming fact that a soft goods oculist won't pass you—I understand better. It's a gift of God, this that you've got. I know! I know! It's the way the rays of light come to your eyes, or something like that. You see tones, at any rate, old man—you see tones so keenly to compensate you for not being sure about a scarlet thread half-hidden throughout a piece of dirty drab—what do you call it?—wincey, you see tones so well that your black-and-whites convey colour."

"Remember you've only seen one of my sketches so far," Martin cautioned. "Are you quite sure? It may have been a fluke!"

"Fluke! That's a comment worthy of an art-critic! No, I've only seen one of your sketches, but it was no fluke. You had observed, and stated, and knew how! You are an artist. But, I say! When you have made your way (for you will, of course; you will soon discard your diapers) how your enemies will hug themselves if this defect leaks out! They'll want to put it in the book!"

"And I thought I would have to give up!" said Martin.

"Oho! You wouldn't give up—for long. Do you know what's the matter with you? You're too sensitive. I'm sensitive! But I always get in first, with the rotters. Colour-blind? Oh, all right—if that's what they call it. It's a misleading word, anyhow. I'm not interested in it. You take my tip and don't tell any gushing suburban young woman that you are colour-*blind*, or she'll say: 'Oh, dear me! Then you can't see a sunset!' or 'Oh; how sad! Then you can't see a rainbow!' And a fellow with a face like yours will be hurt at such comments. If you must tell people about it; tell only people who have the creative and bucking-up instinct well nurtured, and never breathe it to the levellers-down. Colour-*blind?* Rot! I've seen what you can do, and I've heard what you appreciate. You could see more with half an eye than the average sunset-gush person can with two. I'm interested in your work, and I tell you it's criminal of you to go running about asking an oculist to give you the pip instead of getting on with your work!"

"Well, let me look at *your* work, please," said Martin. "I begin to feel ashamed of myself, as if I'm asking everybody to worry over me."

"Don't apologise," said Wilson, laughing. "But why so suddenly self-conscious? Has somebody told you not to be selfish—meaning, of course, has somebody suggested to you that you should unselfishly do what they, selfishly, wish you to do?"

Martin laughed, and began (without replying) to wander round, looking at Wilson's canvases—enjoying them too, despite the defect discovered in Glassford Street, as Glassford Street could never have enjoyed. Suddenly Wilson broke out: "I say! I must get off!

I've to meet the girl." Martin wondered what she was like; she would be a queen, he was sure.

"I'll come down as far as the Caly Station with you. Wait till I get my hands clean," and Wilson strode over to a little basin behind a folding screen to wash, while Martin walked round the walls, looking at the canvases a second time, all in a controlled ecstasy and exhilaration over his first day in a studio. Behind the draught-screen was the sound of soap-lather and water, and gaily Wilson sang:

"It was there by faith
I received my sight,
And now I am happy
All the day, all the day!"

Martin chuckled to himself.

"I heard you singing that when I came up," he said. I thought I must have come to a Mission Hall. I nearly went away!"

"My song? Oh yes!" Wilson laughed. "I read somewhere that an evangelist said he did not see any reason why the devil should own all the catchy tunes, and so he set evangelical words to music-hall airs. If I may be permitted to be as cocksure as the evangelist—I don't see why I shouldn't take their lilts and sing them with genuine feeling!

'It was there by faith
I received my sight,
And now I am happy
All the day, all the day!'

Great thing, sight, by God! It's splendid to see!"

CHAPTER IX

'After Martin had gone Mrs. Moir looked at her husband.

"He's a queer boy," she said.

"He is bearing this about his eyes wonderfully well," answered Mr. Moir, "for he must feel it."

"Bearing it, do you think?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" said he.

"He seems to me so cheerful," she replied, "that I can hardly believe in the colour-blindness."

"But the oculist—you've just seen the oculist."

"It certainly seemed convincing at the moment," she agreed, "but after all he could easily *say* he didn't see some colours. Look at the way he's gone rushing off to this artist now!"

"Oh no! No, no!" cried Mr. Moir. "No. I would dismiss that thought. It's not a ruse to give up the business. The boy really has been showing an interest in the business—you can see by the smart way he goes about even; and besides the oculist would know."

"Well," said she, "if he thinks that now he will be able to go in for Art——"

"Of course that's quite definite—he won't go in for 'Art," said Mr. Moir. "That would be quite definite, even without that eye-trouble—which makes it impossible, at any rate." He ran his hand down his face and emitted a little sigh of worry. "You didn't have lunch with him, did you?" he inquired.

"No. We just had a cup of tea."

"Well, come and have lunch, come and have lunch. We'll go to F. & F's. It isn't often you come into town to lunch with me. We'll have a good lunch."

He wanted to dismiss the subject for the present. If he did not really hold, as part of his creed, that things righted themselves, he did believe that things fussed over might as well be flung aside. If a cigar did not draw he never "faked" with it. If, with Bowles, and now with Beveridge, designing new patterns, he came into a condition of uncertainty, it was typical of him to say, putting his hat on the back of his head, and thrusting his hands deep in his trouser pockets, then taking out his watch and glancing at it: "What's the time? Leave it just now, leave it. Come back to it freshly, later."

Under that large, comfortable, tweed exterior, as he sat at lunch with his wife in F. & F's, strange emotions were in progress, emotions that he felt keenly, although it was not in his line of business, as he would say, to give words to them. There was annoyance at himself. Perhaps he would feel better after he ate; he hoped he would. He recalled Punch's "Feed the brute" —with a grim pursing of the lips. He was perilously nearly angry. There was a kind of nebulous annoyance against his wife. There was annoyance with himself, or regret, that he could be annoyed with her. He hardly knew why he was so annoyed. It was not often that they lunched at F. & F's. These lunches were something of an event. He recalled earlier ones, and they led the way back to far-off ones, when he did not feel this sense of annoyance, when the thought did not keep popping up in his mind: "Ah well, I suppose one has to make allowances for a woman." Now she talked on and on, not about Martin, but about Art and artists. They were spendthrifts, she said; that seemed to be the summing up of her many words.

"I suppose they work a long time," said he, "before they make anything, and then they're like poor children when you give them a penny—they want to spend what

they've made, after not having cash for some time, pay up their debts, and then go round sticking their noses against windows to see what's to buy!" And he tried to give his untroubled smile.

"And then they're so idle," she persisted, "so lazy."

"Yes, yes—yes, yes." And he was irritated at himself for this "yes, yes." Twenty years ago it was not thus.

"And their long hair!" she said.

At that he gave a little laugh, benevolent.

"If they paint well," he said, "if they do their work well, I don't think we should begrudge them their long locks! Perhaps they're imitating the first artist," he added, trying hard to be jocular, to bestir himself to pleasantry. "Or perhaps it's got to do with the gift—just the way stockbrokers run to bald heads! Eh?"

"I would suggest," she began again, very grave, "that Martin goes into the counting-house. John can take up the other side."

"Yes, yes; well, here you are. This is very nice ox-tail."

"We've done all that we can for them," she remarked presently.

He said nothing.

"We've done all that we can for them, I say," she repeated.

"Well, well; well, well, we'll do more," said he.

"And *now* he's gone to an artist's studio. I'm *very* doubtful of artists; they're often very lax men."

He was bending over his plate. Hardly raising his head he gave her now one puzzled glance, under his brows, the white of his eyes showing under the pupils. Then he cleared his throat—and went on with his meal. The wine to-day did not seem to suffice him; he quaffed two liqueurs with the coffee that followed, which was

unusual with Ebenezer Moir. He was trying to raise in himself a spirit of joyance. There must be something wrong with him to find his wife irritating; he hoped he wasn't going to be ill.

"A cab?" the man at the door inquired, when they were departing—still in a condition of dissatisfaction.

"Yes," said he.

He took his wife's elbow to usher her in, never more conscious in his life of trying to be husbandly with her instead of just spontaneously being so. By gad! He hoped he wasn't going to be ill; it wouldn't do to be ill just now—the way things were going all round—Beveridge not quite as much in the swim as Bowles used to be.

"I must return to the office," he said. "You'll get along to the station all right."

"You're not coming, then? Oh, very well," a little disappointed. "Do think over Martin. I am sure he could get along on the business side, if he *applied* himself."

"I am thinking," he said; then "Caledonian!" to the driver, bared his head to his wife, and, turning away felt a sense of relief. He walked back with that long, deliberate stride, almost grim. A schoolboy friend of John's had once said to that boy: "I say, old man, that father of yours would make a dandy centre-forward." Doubtless the youngster had seen Ebenezer Moir in some such puzzled mood. It was much more a puzzled mood than his exterior suggested. The exterior suggested grimness. He had walked off the first vigour by the time he came to the warehouse; but those of his men who were not at lunch heard the thud, thud, of his feet, and the slam of the front door, causing them to consider that if their employer never did "rag" them, he assuredly could if he cared to. The "boss" marched

into the counting-house. The cashier was alone, the clerks at lunch, that honourable employee always remaining in the office during the lunch hour of the majority.

"Nobody been in?" asked Mr. Moir, passing through.

"No, sir."

"H'm!"

All this without stopping in his march—so that what the warehouse heard was the pad, pad, pad, and the slam already mentioned, then two more slams in quick succession—slam of the door from the corridor into the counting-house, slam of the door from the counting-house into his private room. And what the cashier heard farther was the scream of the big chair within as Mr. Moir sat heavily down, also a deep bass clearing of his throat. Next minute the chair screamed again; thump, thump, thump came Ebenezer Moir to the door that opened on to the inner side of the counting-house; and vigorously he opened that door. The cashier, standing at his high desk, had the appearance of trying to focus his eyes so as to look over his shoulder.

"Got a match, Caird?"

Caird clapped both side pockets hurriedly, produced a box, shook it, and tendered it. Mr. Moir put his fingers in and said: "I'll take one or two, if I may. Send the boy for some matches, Caird, when he comes in."

"Strike only on the box, sir," said Caird.

"Oh yes." He stepped back inside his room, then wheeled round, biting the end off a cigar.

"Keep the box, sir."

"That's all right." Mr. Moir lit his cigar, and handing the box back commented: "Strike only on the box! No use trying to get them to strike anywhere else, eh, Caird?" Then he turned round, and slammed the door; it was if he slammed it in the cashier's face.

Creak went his chair! Caird tiptoed back to his desk, nodding his head, holding it on one side, eyes very wide. "Had a row with the wife," he thought. The chair creaked again, the door opened, and Mr. Moir's voice came, thickened because of holding the cigar in his teeth: "Cigar, Caird?"

Caird turned slowly from his desk, turning from the waist as though it were a pivot. Round the corner of the door was Moir's large hand, clutching a cigar-box, the lid open. The cashier stepped over hastily, murmuring: "Thank you, I am sure, sir, very much," and extracted a cigar. Then the door shut gently on a kind of satisfied grunt, and Mr. Caird, balancing the cigar carefully on the top rest of his pen rack, stood a few moments glaring at it, and ruminating. Presently Ebenezer Moir came out of his office, hat on back of head, and stood in the middle of the counting-house, looking up through the clear top of glass, gently raising himself upon his toes, coming down upon his heels, and considering the high windows opposite.

"Been painting recently, Caird?" asked Mr. Moir.

Caird recognized the tone as affable.

"Oh, just a little; I'm always at it more or less," he answered.

"Ever seen any of Martin's drawings?" and Mr. Moir turned over a handful of loose change in his trouser pocket.

"Only the other day, sir. Remarkably clever, remarkably clever, sir. I wish my boy had a turn for drawing, sir." Mr. Moir looked at his cashier as one who should say: "Oh yes, of course, it never occurred to me before! He has a domestic life, and a family, the same as I!"

"I had hoped," Caird continued, "that he might have

been able to make a life-work of what his father has just had to make a hobby."

Mr. Moir lifted his hat, stretched his arm aloft in air holding it, scratched the back of his head, then banged his hat on again. ("We are vulgar, my dear, we are vulgar in Glassford Street.")

"Still, it's a very fine hobby," he said.

"And a very fine profession," declared the cashier. "You see, as a hobby, one always feels how many things one lacks. Now look at me. People that have seen my work praise the colour very highly, but I am always being baffled in other ways. I don't know what artists would say of a little trick I have to resort to so as to get my landscapes well balanced and proportioned."

"Little trick you have? What's the little trick?" Mr. Moir clasped his hands behind his back, and gazed up at the grey-blue sky over the opposite housetops.

"I've got a little bit of a frame," explained Caird, "just like the plain frame of a school slate, and I've stretched across this frame four threads horizontally, and four perpendicularly. When I go out in the country, on Saturday afternoons, I fix this to the side of my easel, you see, and then I step back a bit, you see——"

Mr. Moir turned to listen.

"—And then I make a mark with my heel on the ground, a certain length back, and study my landscape through this frame, do you see? And on my canvas I've faint lines, spaced, the same as the threads on the frame. But if I see anybody who looks like an artist coming near, I take the thing down."

"I see," said Mr. Moir, looking whimsical. "You mean you wouldn't have to resort to these subterfuges if you had been able to go——"

"—to the schools, sir. Ah, it's the training."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Moir. "I daresay one is apt

to look upon the artist's life too much as a case of—if you have the gift you have it, and if you don't you don't."

"There's a lot of hard work," said Caird, "as well as gift."

"It always has seemed to me," remarked Mr. Moir, "as if there was a great deal of loafing too. Now, what do all young artists go to the Continent for?"

"Oh! For the galleries, sir, and for the tuition. Many of the big French artists take pupils; and many others of them are visiting masters, and come round the *ateliers* criticising the work."

"I see, I see. I know a young fellow—he's been to Paris, Italy, and Morocco, I think—yes, Morocco."

"It's the colour, the colour, sir, the colour of the Latin countries! Why, it's tremendous, the effect it has. For my last holidays, now, I got a friend of mine in the Bilbao trade to arrange for me to have a run to Spain on one of his company's boats. Going that way, you see, I was able to afford to go on to Madrid and see the Prado."

"What's that?" asked Mr. Moir.

"That's their great Art Gallery. I felt a little selfish leaving the wife, but she preferred Rothesay, at any rate. She has a kind of impression, I think, that Spain is all stilettos! Oh yes, it is a fine thing for a young man who is going to paint to go to the lands of sunshine. The effect it must have on a young man with any taste for painting must be tremendous."

"H'm, yes; I see that. This going to the Continent, then, is something like the way you see boys bending down and looking at the world in between their legs, wrong way up"—this half jocularly.

But Mr. Caird stepped forward and wagged a finger at his employer—indeed, his attitude suggested that had

Mr Moir been his friend instead of his employer he might have button-holed him.

"Just, sir, just!" he cried, with great earnestness. "And it's wonderful how that dodge brings the colour up. We get too much accustomed to the colours round us. I often do that myself when I'm out sketching on Saturday afternoons."

In the back of Mr. Moir's eye was a twinkle at the new picture of his cashier. He scratched the back of his head again, this time tilting his hat over his eyes as he scratched.

"Of course Martin is colour-blind," he said.

"I've been hearing about that," Caird answered. "It's a terrible handicap, isn't? It's hardly believable—when his sketches are so good. When I think of one or two that I have seen I am amazed. He has been to the oculist, I suppose, to-day, sir?"

"Yes—yes—been—yes."

"What does the oculist say?"

"He says it can't be remedied. Perhaps it's a pity, considering the boy's so keen on drawing, eh?"

"Of course there is black-and-white work," said Caird.

"You mean for the magazines?"

"And books, and book-covers, and posters."

"H'm, yes, quite a range, eh? But I shouldn't think artists would do that sort of thing," said Mr. Moir. "Rather looked down upon, isn't it?"

"Artists, sir? Why? Oh, there are big men in black-and-white. For instance, now, there's the Beggarstaff Brothers. I see a rumour in an Art paper I take in that they are not Dutchmen at all, but two Englishmen. Their posters are all works of art—should be preserved in our galleries. There may be a great future before the poster, and our black-and-white illustrators—such as Phil May and Raven Hill; oh, and then there's a very

good man—I've seen some excellent portraits by him. He also evidently does not look with contempt upon the drawing for reproduction—a man of the name of Maurice Griffenhagen. In these days of the advancement of reproductive processes there's an immense field for black-and-white work with brush, or pen and ink-drawing, for example, one of the most charming methods of work."

"Do you tell me so?"

But as one of the clerks came in now the conversation ended.

"Just before you take off your coat," said Caird, "get a box of matches."

"That's all right," said Mr. Moir. "I'm going into the ware'us'; I'll get a box from somewhere."

He strolled into the warehouse, looked down the well to where the calender man was at work. He was now in a happier frame of mind; he felt like a captain who sees the fog lifting. The calender man, looking up, touched his hat. Being paid upon piecework, with a small salary, a retaining fee, as it were, he considered himself less an employee than a kind of tenant. His manner towards Mr. Moir slightly amused that big man, and the staff as well. He was a roguish person, very quick to take his bearings, to know when his rogueries would be appreciated, and when found tedious.

"Well, William," said Mr. Moir, "how are you this afternoon?"

"Just wrastlin' away, sir, with the worries incidental to ma avocation," came William's voice up the well.

"And what are these, William?"

"Man, Mr. Moir, laird, ma heid's full o' fluff. Penters ha' the colic, masons get marble dust in their lungs, I get the fluff o' the pieces up ma nostril. There's only

one business, so far as I ken, the similar worries o' which are mair like a blessin' in disguise."

It was of course expected of Mr. Moir to ask, as he did ask: "What business is that?"

"Beer bottling, sir. Man, there's an awfu' lot o' dust and fluff in these last yarns ye've been buyin'. What an age of adultery we live in! And naethin' can be done for it. Petition Parliament? What is our Parliament composed of, I ask ye?" and his intonation became that with which he harangued at the Glasgow Green in his leisure evenings. "Just a pack of bloodsucking gulls and cormorants!"

Mr. Moir thought to remark: "But gulls do not suck blood, do they, William?" Instead, as that seemed a minor detail, he asked, being in the mood to be wrapped away from himself for a space: "How is the Socialist party progressing?"

"Oh, man, Mr. Moir! Socialism! Did I no' tell ye aboot that? I had occasion some time ago to go into an edifeece with two doors. Over the one door was the word 'In,' and over the other the word 'Out.' I had a man wi' me who had been expounding Socialism; and it happened that, withoot thinkin', we cam' tae the 'Out' door. I turned away tae go in at the 'In' door. 'Where are ye goin'?' says he. Says I: 'I'm goin' in at the "In" door.' Says he: 'Oh,' says he, 'I pay nae attention to that.' Says I: 'But, man,' says I, 'there's a lot o' folk comin' and goin', and it's but right to observe these notices.' But he was beyond reason. Says he: 'When I come to a door I go in—whatever door is nearest!'—and he shoves his way in. I went in the 'In' door, and met him inside. 'And now,' says he, 'what was I sayin' about Socialism?' Says I to him: 'Man,' says I, 'ye were sayin' some beautiful things—but it's the practice that bothers me. This is a crooded lavatory,' says I,

'and if you are a Socialist, as ye talk Socialism you should observe the "In" and the "Out." Now Mr. Moir, I ask ye, is that Socialism?"

"It is Socialists, I'm afraid," said Mr. Moir.

"Eh, laird, ye have got it. That man set me thinkin' over all the vocal Socialists I ken. There's another —with a text from William Morris over his mantelpiece, ye'll have heard of William Morris, sir. I've often looked at that text. It says how good a thing it is to live in a wee hoose doin' your ain work without servants. Well, Mr. Moir, this man got on wonderful well, and syne he got a servant, and a bigger hoose—to have a bedroom for the servant, I suppose. Doon cam' the text! There was nae mair need to have it up, for his good wife to consider. He had got her a servant at last. Och ay! It's the same wi' everything. The only Socialist I ever met was a conservative—called Ebenezer Moir. It's the same wi' Christianity. The only real admirer of that wonderful figure, Jesus Christ, that I ever met was an Agnostic. The priests and meenisters, it's ma opinion, took Christ in tae their midst just to make a reedicule o' Him. His ain disciples began it. Peter comes runnin' to Him, d'ye mind, and says he: 'Oh,' says he, 'here's a man casting oot devils round the corner, and we told him to stop.' And Christ says: 'What did ye do that for?' says He. 'He who is not against us is for us,' says He. Everything is whimsaleerie, Mr. Moir. If you want to see a parcel o' ruffians and self-seekin' folk, go to a Socialist club; if ye want to see Christ re-crucified, go to the hoose that is ruled ower by some ould Christian lady. But if you want to find a real, kind Christian—do ye know this, Mr. Moir, it's my opinion ye'll have to go and look for him in a hell-fire club. We're a' whimsaleerie, sir. And look at the letters to the papers, and see which letters is the most savage.

It's the letters from folk that want to put an end to war! Talk—talk—talk—talk, Mr. Moir. A little less talk aboot what's wrong wi' the world, a little less looking outside would be good; a little more trying to be honest wi' ourselves first, and then maybe we would manage to be honest wi' the world, and mean what we say, and what we talk. No, Mr. Moir, I'm not a Socialist, and I'm not a Christian."

Mr. Moir had stopped smiling, was looking down the well very thoughtful.

"There is a lot in what you say, William," said he. "Much in what you say;" and he walked on. He came to the Wincey department and:

"Good afternoon, Charlie," said he.

"Good afternoon, sir," answered Charlie MacDougall. "What's the verdict?"

"Verdict?"

"About Mr. Martin."

"Oh yes—quite. Well, there is no doubt, it has been confirmed. There seems to be shades of pink in which he can only see the blue. He'll range a pink in among the blues. That would be fatal for fancy-goods work."

"How's the lad takin' it?"

Again the same question! That was evidently the point of view that first struck strangers.

"He seems to be bearing up very well. I've let him off this afternoon, seeing that the day was broken into, at any rate, with the forenoon at the oculist's. I expect you can spare him."

"That's all right, sir."

"Indeed, he's gone to see an artist, an old schoolfellow. How did you find him, Charlie?"

"In what way, sir?"

"Interested in the business?"

Charlie shook his head.

"He tried to be, sir," he said, "genuinely tried to be."

"I thought he seemed very satisfactory."

"Mr. Moir," said Charlie, "I'm very greatly vexed. This news of the colour-blindness has upset me; for if you'll pardon me saying it, it has been on my mind recently whether it wasn't my duty to suggest to you to put him in some other business where he would have scope for his pencil."

"Did he speak to you about that?"

"Na, na! I used to see his sketches. Have you seen the last one he did of Archie, sir?"

"No. He didn't show me that. I wonder why he didn't show me that?"

"I believe Archie has got it in the ware'us'. Will I go and see?"

"Yes, you might."

MacDougall returned presently with a framed sketch. It was a drawing of Archie, hat on back of head, moustache drooping, one tooth showing, a little quiff of hair over his forehead, in the attitude of talking, scratching under his right knee.

"It's a little bit of a—what ye might term a *take-off* sir, but——"

"Yes, it has a touch of caricature," said Mr. Moir. He was frowning at it very seriously. "It's a portrait—but there's just a bit of the young rogue in it."

"Ay, it's Archie all right," said MacDougall.

"Did Archie have this mounted and framed?" asked Mr. Moir slowly.

"Yes, sir; when I asked him for it just now he told me he'd just got it back from the framer."

"Ah-ha!" and again: "Ah-ha!" Here was a stranger having his son's drawing framed—while he—— He cleared his throat and frowned.

"It's all the more wonderful seeing that he had no training," said Charlie.

"To my mind," said Mr. Moir—"I don't think it's only because I'm his father—but to my mind this is as good as many a published cartoon."

"Every bit, sir."

Mr. Moir held the framed portrait before him, considering it.

"I'll take it back to Archie," said he. He walked on to the Dress-Goods department. "Can I have this for an hour or two, Archie?" he said, holding up the drawing.

"Bring it back, sir, bring it back. It's no' for sale. I've been talkin' to the missus aboot it. It's been at the framer's, and she hasna seen it yet. Isn't it dum impudent, sir, and awfu' like me? I can see it maself."

"I'll send it back to you again," answered Mr. Moir, and turned to go.

"Well, don't forget, sir."

"No, no, Archie. I'll send it back to you very soon."

Going through the counting-house: "Mr. Caird!" he said.

"Yes sir?"

And as Mr. Moir went into his room by the near door, Caird entered by the farther.

"Have you seen this, Mr. Caird?" and Moir exhibited the drawing at arm's length.

Caird stretched out a hand.

"I have not," said he. "It's got him—Archie to the life. Three generations of ham and eggs, and tea, and new white bread, holidays in the fair week to Gourock or Rothesay, a pen'orth o' wilks, and a pin sticking under his waistcoat, I'll be bound, ready to pick them with—Archie to the life!"

"That's what I feel," said Mr. Moir, chuckling; he

would not have said these things of Archie himself, being further from him in the social scale than his cashier, and the speech struck him (incidentally) as an interesting sidelight upon the various social strata in his warehouse.

"Who did it? Is it——"

"Martin!"

"Mr. Martin! I wondered. It seemed the same hand as the last I saw, but—it's wonderful, a big advance."

"What about the technique of it? You know about that sort of thing, Caird."

"I should say really quite wonderful," Caird replied. "It's pencil; and strangely enough, though pen and ink is much more tricky, from the pen-and-ink drawings of Mr. Martin's that I have seen I should say that he was better at handling pen and ink than pencil. His pen-and-ink technique is, of course, a little old fashioned. He uses the old cross-hatchings, works at right angles a good deal, instead of adopting the new method of oblique crossings. But that is only a kind of *fashion*—more than *method*, perhaps."

"What about the colour-blindness?"

"Do you know, Mr. Moir," said Caird slowly, "I don't want to cast doubt upon your son—but I can conceive of a boy being so keen upon art as to seek a subterfuge." He paused abruptly, and then said with vigour: "No! No, that's not it. He's too wide awake a young man to pretend he's colour-blind so as to get out of the cloth business when what he wants to be is a painter."

"That's what I said to his mother," replied Mr. Moir—and was sorry the moment after. It was that suggestion of Mrs. Moir's that had been hurting him all day. But he felt, as the words slipped out, that he should not have let them slip out—telling of his wife's suspicion. For Caird to be suspicious in the same way was not so bad

—and even Caird took back the suspicion before it was fairly voiced.

"You were talking of black-and-white work," began Mr. Moir. "How would a youngster get into that line?"

"There's an excellent School of Art in our city, of course," said Caird. He put the drawing up on the mantelpiece, and walked back from it a little way, considering it. Mr. Moir, looking at it also, began to speak, as if speaking to himself:

"John is nearly twenty. I had passed through the business by the time I was twenty. He's taken prizes, and so he's been kept at college. Martin didn't win prizes, even at school, so we took him away." The door opened, and Martin entered. "Oh, it's you, Martin! I've just been showing this drawing of yours to Mr. Caird, and he tells me that there's scope for black-and-white work, money to be made at it, nothing *infra dig* about it——"

"*Infra dig!* I should say there's not, dad."

Caird nodded greeting to him.

"I mentioned Raven-Hill," said he.

"And Phil May, and Townsend," cried Martin eagerly. "And look at Frank Craig's wash stuff! I've just seen a drawing of his—an original—in a shop in Gordon Street. It's a black-and-white ablaze with colour!" he finished, quoting Wilson.

"Well," said Mr. Moir, "Mr. Caird has just been suggesting the School of Art!" and he smiled from one to the other. From his point of view what he was about to propose was something of a risk, but he had decided, standing there, to give Martin "a show." It seemed hardly fair that John, three years older, should still be at school just because he was a prize-winner, while Martin, with a gift for drawing (in black and white at any rate, in which Mr. Caird said there was a living to

be made, too!) should not be sent to a school—a School of Art, instead of Grammar—where he, also, might prove ability by taking prizes.

"Wilson has just been speaking about the School of Art to me also," answered Martin, his eyes glowing.

"Then we are not at cross-purposes now," said Mr. Moir, and one big "burden" from his heart "rolled away."

CHAPTER X

When Mrs. Moir heard, that evening, of the intention of her husband to give, as he called it, "a show" to Martin and send him to the School of Art, she seemed like one aggrieved. How, she wanted to know, could one who did not see every shade of every colour—who certainly did not see pinks and scarlets clearly and definitely enough to allow of his being a designer of cloth—ever hope to become an artist? She had other objections, all the old objections, to restate: length of time that must pass before he could be self-supporting; possibility of never coming to the front, possibility of, for all his days, starving in poverty—or being dependent on his father's doles. On and on she talked in this strain till she began to shake Mr. Moir's resolves; and eventually a compromise was effected.

Martin was to attend evening classes at the school (Mr. Caird had spoken of these as well as of day classes) and go into the counting-house, or office, during the day. It was about time that the office-boy apprentice (apprenticed free, and receiving £10 his first year, £12 his second, and £15 his third year of apprenticeship) should be moved into the warehouse; he had been nearly a year in the counting house, and he could take Martin's place in the Wincey department. Martin would begin office education with the petty-cash book. Mrs. Moir would have vetoed the School of Art altogether, but she knew that was beyond her powers. She puzzled Martin. Something told him that she had deeper reasons than any she mentioned for objecting to the pursuit of art.

However, the compromise was decided on, and next day, carrying a little package of specimens of his work, he went up to the School of Art, went up with quick-beating heart, to ask for an interview with the head-master, and to enroll himself as an evening student. He found the school door—an ordinary glass door with a lamp over it. The door was open. A lady of char was applying pipe clay, or some such preparation, to the flags within, and seeing him, drew aside her pail for him to pass. He took it from this that visitors did not ring the bell, but went boldly upstairs; so bowing to the lady, and tip-toeing over her work so as not to soil it (a carefulness she acknowledged with a friendly nod), he adventured along the stone corridor, up white-washed stairs, on the walls of which hung framed drawings, executed in red chalk, in charcoal, in pencil.

He would have liked to stop to look at each closely, but felt slightly shy, like a schoolboy going to school for the first time. At the landing he looked into a big room that seemed to contain nothing but easels, all over the floor, and on the other side saw a corridor with statues from the antique standing frigid and silent. He crept round a corner, wondering where the living were—and a man came out of a doorway and looked at him. Martin speculated as to who this might be; but the man did not speak, so he wandered on farther, pried in at a half-open door on which was painted the word "Elementary."

"Are you looking for someone?" asked the man.

"I have come up to arrange about classes."

"Been here before?"

"No."

"Just to begin?"

"Yes."

"Oh that's all right—Elementary, then. Do you want to enroll?"

"Er—ah—are you the head-master?"

The man frowned.

"Do you want to see the head-master?" he counter-questioned.

"I have some drawings with me. I should like him to look over them, so that he might have an opinion, but—perhaps"—he did not wish to offend this man, whoever he was—"perhaps you would be good enough to——" He took the package from under his arm, and prepared to loosen the cord.

"I'll see, I'll see," said the janitor, and went away remarking: "You are early. He is in, as a matter of fact, but——" And talking to himself, he walked to a door. Martin, following in the rear, saw him pause and slightly change his manner before he tapped on the door, and then opened, almost stealthily, looking round it as if he were stalking a mouse inside, thought Martin, and tried not to smile. He disappeared from sight. A sonorous voice sounded within, the janitor reappeared, closed the door; and announced that the head-master was engaged, and asked Martin to come up later on—in the evening, about seven.

"Very well," said Martin, and turned to go—when there was a sound of hurrying feet, and a large, dark man came out of the room into which the janitor had peered. He looked at Martin. Martin looked at him. There seemed to be something like recognition—though they had never seen each other before. What was it? What could it be? Martin had experience of a queer, inexplicable sense of having come home. What was the cause of it? He looked at the big man with admiration; he was like Fortuny—Mariano Fortuny; perhaps that was it. And yet he wasn't like Fortuny either!

"I'm very, very busy just now, young man," said the big man. (As he spoke Martin suddenly thought: "No

he is less like Fortuny than like—no, I don't know; he's like an artist!") "If you could make it convenient to come up to-night about seven——" He saw the package. "Are these specimens of your work?"

"Yes. I thought you might want to look at them."

"Bring them again—at seven o'clock, if you please."

"Very well, sir, I will," and Martin bowed.

He went downstairs again, and came on to Sauchiehall Street with a kind of singing in his veins. The city had taken on a new colour, it seemed, while he had been advancing up that white-washed stairs to hunt out the office in the deserted corridors. He walked down to Glassford Street, to report to his father, as had been arranged over breakfast. He found Mr. Moir just finishing the apportioning out of the day's correspondence.

"Hullo, hullo!" said he. "Well, fixed up?"

Martin told of his morning's doings, and of the appointment for the evening, Mr. Moir turning his swivel chair round this way, round that, stretching his legs. He was listening to Martin's report, but seemed to have a thought in abeyance the while. Having heard all—a tame account that told nothing of the queer feeling as of coming home, coming to something already known, instead of going out to something new—Mr. Moir stroked his face down in a way he had when about to make some announcement, and clutching his beard he growled:

"Well, I don't see how you can work to-day. You'll be too much excited, thinking about this evening. Besides—I've been thinking it all over again. I met Reginald Harringway this morning. Funny! I haven't seen him for a long time. We talked about you. He seems to think that a decent show is best given by the day classes. We won't arrange yet about you coming into the office. I think you had better, just for the time being at any rate, go back to help Charlie MacDougall.

You won't be going home for dinner, of course. Have you money?"

"I have a shilling and some coppers."

"Oh! You want more than that. You may have some drawing paper, or things to buy. Here's half a sovereign—better take that." He stroked his face again, making little noises in his throat, signifying contentment. "Yes," he said. "Just for the present we won't make any more changes here. Let me know to-night when you come home how things go."

"Thank you very much, dad."

"Yes. All right. Uh-huh!" and Mr. Moir twisted his chair back so that he sat again four-square to his desk. "Tell Caird, will you," he said. The interview was closed. Martin went out, package of drawings tucked under his arm, turning over the half-sovereign in his pocket.

His father was right—he did not do much energetic work that day. There was a brightness in his eyes. Charlie, hearing his news, did not expect him to be a very serviceable assistant, took, indeed, pity upon him very soon, and gave him some samples to deliver, with the words: "You may as well take these out to-day, ma lad, seeing they are ready." Then he smiled a dry smile and added: "If you hurry going you can take your time on the way back. There's nothing much doing to-day."

He took Charlie at his word, and helped to make the day of waiting seem brief by wandering in his old haunts—the neighbourhoods of the old-clo' shops, the bird-fanciers. His quixotry did not rise to-day. It was on holiday. Shamelessly he came back and entertained himself till lunch-time, down in the packing room, with Jevons, the stencils O and Q, and a nail on the wall—the game being to toss the stencils at the nail from several paces off and try to make them hang there. The head

packer routed them about a quarter to one, when Martin went upstairs again.

Charlie seemed amused instead of annoyed. There was more of friendliness than sarcasm in his remark, at one o'clock, when he put on his home-going coat, tugged down his waistcoat behind, tugged the lapels in front: "Keep on deck while I'm at lunch, Martin. Some customer might come who wouldn't care whether ye were going to the School of Art to-night. He would want to get his Winceys just the same." Martin felt half-ashamed, and smiled guiltily. "I'll hurry back," said Charlie, and over his shoulder he cast a glance of merriment at his assistant. Martin made up his mind that he would take only half an hour for lunch—come back and stick to work—but, alas! his sense of honour was in abeyance to-day. When Charlie returned, and he was free to go and eat, he departed with that intention. After lunch, however, taking just a brief stroll round, before returning to the warehouse, he saw an announcement, by the side of a Fine Art shop, of an exhibition of pictures by Harrington Mann. Bang went a shilling out of his father's half sovereign—and in the quiet-carpeted gallery he sat on a divan, and looked at "The Charge of the Macdonalds at Killiecrankie," at "White wall, Blue night," and many other works that inspired him to dream. Would he ever be the subject of a "one-man show"? Conceited! Absurd! It could never be! This was too much to hope for. He cast a last look on the pictures and passed again into the street, walked back Glassford Street-wards, but not to Glassford Street. He could not, he simply could not, go into that place of stacked cloth and odour of cloth, jungles of cloth, out of the thin air and the thin sunlight spread upon the grey-blue pavements. He looked with eager and appreciative eyes at the tones of walls, streets, sky, and then stole

down to his favourite smoking-room, in Ingram Street, to meditate. There was only the one smoking-room in those days, between Queen Street and Glassford Street, and, sitting there, in subdued light, he observed carefully without staring the lights and shadows on faces that bent over chess-boards, on hands that moved over the boards. He drank Russian tea out of a tall glass set in an electro-plate holder, smoked a briar pipe (to which he had advanced recently), blew smoke, observed, dreamt, and let the world wag. But on his return Charlie said nothing caustic. Charlie had not expected him to hasten back after lunching that day. Great day! Wonderful day!

Twilight came over it at last, and Martin posted up Sauchiehall Street to his appointment at the School of Art. How excellent were the street lamps, how delectable the variously coloured bull's-eye lights in the front of the tramcars (they were still horse cars in those days), the lights in the stationers' windows, the notepapers and packets of envelopes in many hues—blue, cream white; the sticks of sealing-wax pale blue, dark blue, purple; the leaden ink-pots, with tall decorative quills thrust in them. How paintable, in the furriers' windows, were the rich furs, sables and marten; the muffs of black and white ermine. How mellow, in the dulled windows of a hotel buffet near the Arcade, did the inner light suffuse itself. The subtle effect of all this spangle of light upon the faces of the human beings on the pavements was adorable to Martin to-night. Romance was reality; reality was romantic. What glamour of lights and shades, flesh tints and half-tones, were on the faces that went past him. How keenly he noted momentary glimpses of the passers-by, shadows of hat-brims sweeping over cheek-bones, dipping under the eyes; high lights on the chins or rounded cheeks. Fascinating was the lighting of the face of a man who paused in the

shelter of the Arcade to light his pipe. Martin was on the way to a place where there awaited him those who would advise him how to put down on paper, card-board, canvas, all these things that he saw. How his heart leapt as he perceived the line of a girl's neck, at sight of its subtle sweep from head to sweeping shoulders, while she, carrying in her arms a great fur cloak taken from a dummy in a window, thrust aside a dark curtain that backed the window space.

It was as if he had already begun his training as an artist. Rose Street! Here was Rose Street! He thrust open the door and entered, immensely alert to all impressions and sensations. A draught of cold air followed him; he walked down the stone-flagged corridor, hearing the echoing ring of his heels, and it seemed to him as if that sound must announce to any observing listener on the stairs above: "Here comes an excited novitiate, trying to keep calm!" Brilliant gas-light now shone upon the drawings that hung on the walls to show what the School could do. By the grace of God there was no young man—who had risen beyond School of Art craftsmanship (and forgotten how much it had once meant)—sneering at these drawings as Martin mounted to-night. He heard no voice say: "Pooh! School of Art drawings!" He had much to learn, but sufficient unto the night was its glory.

He pored over these works now, studies from the Antique, and wondered how they were done. There were some as on a red ground, flecked over with sure touches of white. There were others done with a black substance of an amazing dreamy quality, charcoal work. There was the despised stump-work. There were pencil drawings and wash drawings. Every now and then little draughts of cold air came up after him while he paused to study these examples on the staircase. Sometimes the front

door slammed, and grunts of disapproval were emitted by men mounting the stairs. Sometimes the draught was prolonged and accompanied by the sound of a pipe being knocked out against a heel.

He went up slowly, looking at these drawings all the way, paying brief heed to others who passed upward, though now and then a "Pardon me!" would bring him round to find that in bending to examine the work he was slightly barricading the way. As he came to the first landing he found a slight milling there of the arriving students, suggesting that the School was well filled. Varied were the types, varied the faces. There were young men—very young men, mere "boys" in his estimation—boys in spectacles looking half timid, half sullen, with unpleasant down on their chins, as though their mothers, objecting to them growing up, had prohibited shaving as yet, and occasional clippings with scissors surreptitiously borrowed from the sewing-basket, had rather pathetically failed. There were older boys, men indeed they seemed in his eyes, who had a bearing as if they were at home in the place; they mounted gaily three steps at a time; they saluted loiterers on the landing and strolled on. There were men who looked as if clothes did not interest them. There were extreme dandies. But heedlessness in the matter of apparel, or meticulous attention to apparel, seemed, here, valueless as indications of caste. Pressed-pants chatted with Baggy-knees. To be a denizen of the West End meant here no more than to be a denizen of the East End. In fact, if there was any difference, perhaps Kelvinside was less esteemed than Springburn! Here was a society in which, if his first sensings were right, he could be sociable.

As Martin proceeded up the second flight he noticed that those who overtook him were all of an age to wield the matutinal steel; the downy-chinned ones had dis-

appeared in the corridor where was the door with the word "Elementary" painted on it. As he reached the second landing he looked up suddenly, sharply as a deer in the forest; for he was being observed. There was a group of young men upon this landing looking down, several of them with elbows and hands on the rail, chins on their hands, bending so that the picture struck Martin as "rather weird"—or half weird, half droll. Seeing his sudden consciousness of their scrutiny they either immediately averted their gaze, or gave him the faintest sign of friendliness, to be discerned only by one fitted to receive it. He took quick stock of them. There was one with bantering eyes, red hair close cropped, pointed red beard; so young was he that he could not, despite his beard, delude the onlooker into thinking him more than a stripling. Martin thought him oddly reminiscent of Raven Hill, whose photograph he had recently seen—perhaps in *The Idler*. He evidently answered, perkily and beamingly, to the name of Smith. There was another, who showed, at the top of a very disreputable suit of tweeds, a massive head, with long, golden, dishevelled hair. There was a little ugly black-haired man, hands deep in pockets, looking very grim. There was a tall, cameo-faced, willowy person, with hair longer than that of Rubenstein. There was an extremely cheeky and charming young man, whose face was the face of a bad little cherub, hair perfectly normal, save that across his forehead it came down in the manner of a bang. Doubtless they would all live and learn, though perhaps some of them, in discarding the foibles of ardent youth, might be less likeable. "Thank God," someone has said, "for the young men with brains enough to make asses of themselves," though to be sure, to Martin, these young men were no laughing-stocks, but magnets. They are described here from the point of view of that correct self-

righteous circle in which Martin had lived and moved so far, that great class that may not be judged, but that judges, rather than from his own secret point of view, nurtured despite his birth.

A bell rang somewhere, and there was a rush of feet all over the building. That sound passed away, and Martin was alone on the stairs, with the framed drawings, and the sound of hissing gas-jets. He was just wondering where he would find the head-master now—if he would be in the same room in which the janitor had found him—when the great man suddenly appeared beside him.

"Ah! There you are! Come in."

Martin took off his hat and followed the Chief into a very small room that bore no extravagant signs of artiness.

"Brought your sketches?" asked the Great Man, and Martin surrendered his packet. Then, speedily as an adept dealing cards, the Head rapidly dealt out the drawings on his table. He cast them down as cards are dealt for two players. And here, at the very commencement, he, as our American cousins say, "made good" with Martin, caused the boy to look upon him with respect, esteem, admiration, for he perceived what was being thus featly done. His better work was being selected, his worse discarded. The celerity of it amazed Martin; the rightness of the judgment won his deepest confidence. He had taken up a dozen and a half specimens of his work; and now the Head definitely thrust aside a full dozen, and leaning one hip negligently on the table, he took up the half-dozen, and considered each of them again.

"Why so much pen-and-ink work?" he asked quickly, in a rich voice.

"Well—er—I like it."

"Yes, obvious reason. What possessed you to do

this?'' and he held up a drawing that showed, upon a high poop a man of the Captain Kidd order, aiming a pistol at a villainous-looking seaman who was falling all asprawl over the ship's side.

''I don't know. I suppose I was thinking of magazine illustration.''

''Quite so,'' said the Chief, tossed it down, and held up another that showed the stately soaring of a leafless beech tree. ''I suppose you know that's not bad?'' he said.

''I think it's not very bad—fairly good, perhaps,'' Martin replied.

''All right,'' and the Head thrust the handful at him. ''Don't destroy that one at any rate. Keep it for six months in a drawer and then look at it again.'' Frowning slightly, he studied the floor for a minute, while Martin half surreptitiously studied him, thinking he would like to make a drawing of him. Then the Chief suddenly looked him in the eyes and said: ''Three days a week in the Antique, two days a week in the Life. Now remember—three Antique, two Life. Where would you like to start?''

''Life!'' answered Martin promptly, in a tone as if he said ''The Seventh Heaven.''

The Chief laughed gently to himself.

''Very well,'' he said. ''Ever drawn from the Life before?''

''I'm always drawing from the Life.''

''Oh yes, of course—in that sense. That's your gardener among these, isn't it?'' he asked, indicating the returned packet, and while Martin acknowledged ''Yes, it is!'' he walked over to the mantelpiece, leant against it, and said sharply: ''Why don't you come as a day student?''

Why indeed? It had been almost decided last night that he should come as a day student, then, in the moment

of decision, repealed. He wondered if his father's words to-day might be taken as a hope that the day studies would, after all, be allowed. He feared not. His mother, he considered, was too deeply averse to Art—why he could not tell. He was chary to blame her.

"I'm afraid my people won't let me," he replied after some hesitancy.

"I see," said the Chief. "Hardly care for you to come even for the evening, eh?" a dry note in his voice.

"Well—er—my mother—er—doesn't, at any rate," Martin admitted, trying to make out that half of his progenitors (as it were) was not despicable. For the atmosphere here was very different from that of Queensholme, and among the Queensholme visitors—Mrs. Harringway excepted—there was a feeling that Art should be apologised for. Here he felt that he should apologise, and find extenuating circumstances, for his kindred.

The Big Man thrust his hands in his pockets and elevated his shoulders.

"It doesn't matter to *me*, you understand," he said, "but it does matter to you—and to art." Suddenly he asked quickly: "Can't you coax?"

"It's no good," said Martin.

The Chief glared at him briefly, as if to discover in his eyes how hard he had tried.

"No rich uncle?" he asked.

"I have," said Martin, thinking of his Uncle John.

"Why not ask him to stump up?"

"No!" Martin nipped definitely.

"Oh!" said the Chief. He put his head on one side, gave a faintly waggish smile, and inquired: "Any rich *aunt* by any chance?"

"No. I have no aunt."

"Ah well," he sighed, "your father won't stump up; you won't ask your uncle to; and you haven't any aunt;

so there you are! But I don't hesitate to say that after two years here I could pass you out as a magazine illustrator. That is surely a reasonable appeal to your—er—if I may say so—commercial progenitors. However—come up to the Life Class with me."

Martin followed him upwards to the top flight, at either end of which was a door, upon the one the word "Life," upon the other "Lecture Theatre." Life classes were held in both. The Chief advanced to the latter; there he turned and said:

"You are going to see a Life Class. When you go in here you will see a matter of twenty men at easels. I want you to give me your word of honour that you will look at none of these easels, that you will look at nothing but the model."

"I give you my word of honour," said Martin solemnly. Here might have been the first step of initiation into some secret society.

"Thank you," said the Chief, and opened the door.

Martin expected to see something, but saw nothing—because of a curtain hanging before the door from a semicircular rod. Above and beyond that rod, at the curtain top, rays of light showed and a high, glimmering ceiling. The Big Man closed the door, drew the curtain, and advanced; Martin, behind him, looked straight down over descending tiers of floor. At the bottom was an old man—Martin thought it the most amazingly life-like lay figure imaginable—an old bearded man, sitting on the edge of a small wooden platform, left hand on left knee, right hand raised holding a tall staff by the middle, to take the weight of his bent body. Over him were flaming gas jets, with reflectors casting the light down. What a life-like figure it was! Martin could do nothing but stare at it, even after he became aware that the Chief was standing still looking at him. And at that moment

the eyes of the model moved in their direction. Good life! It was a man! Movement here and there, upon the tiers of flooring between them and the old man in the illuminated pit, caused Martin to observe the twenty or so young men regarding whom he had been cautioned, and quickly he evaded from them the glance which their movements had drawn.

"Now," said the Chief, seeing that the new student's first astonishment was over, "where would you like to stand?" and he stepped down slowly. "How do you like this?" He looked keenly at Martin.

"I like it," said Martin.

"All right. Will you kindly just bring over one of these easels from the wall?"

Martin brought an easel, and placed it erect.

"Have you paper?" asked the Chief. "No—you haven't! Never mind—that piece of rough protecting board that you have for your sketches will do," and taking it from Martin's hand he put it on the easel. "Now let me see; did you ever use charcoal to draw with?"

"No—I can't draw with charcoal," said Martin hastily.

The Big Man had been standing with right thumb and forefinger in waistcoat pocket. Up came the hand now, presenting to Martin, as by a trick of legerdemain, a little piece of brittle black stick.

"Then you had better draw with charcoal—keeping freshly in mind your promise to me not to look at the other men to see how to use it. Just proceed, and if you find yourself making your paper dirty, don't let that worry you. I have to go downstairs; I shall be back anon."

He stepped away, then stepped back.

"I don't know how long the model has been posed,"

he said. "He may rest before my return. If he does so, the other men are certain to come round and look at what you've done. They will say various things to you. They will say, for example: 'I like your drawing; it has character.' Or they may say nothing at all, but move on in a furtive sort of way, as if the new man is disappointing to them. Pay no attention. And, above all, in the rest, do not look at their work." Then he was gone.

Here was a fine state of affairs for Martin! For, much though he desired to draw the old man, he did not know how to begin with the charcoal. But he must do something before the Chief returned, if only to prove how grateful he was to him for being so splendidly kind and interested. He was tempted to have just one peep at the other men, to see what on earth they did with the charcoal, whether they sharpened it—"or what." He used it at first as one might a writing-pencil, found that was wrong, clutched it in a new way, holding his hand with its back to the paper, the charcoal pressed against his forefinger with his thumb. This was better; but he was glad that the Big Man had told him not to worry if he dirtied the paper—for he dirtied it deplorably. In a moment of anguish over a smudge he did as the uncouth, who seldom use a pen, do in the moment of anxiety over a blot: he gave it a quick flick with his hand—and found that by doing so he effected a compromise—wiped out the black smudge, but left a grey one. Decidedly it was going to be a dirty drawing. He was excited, keen. He must see, simply must see, that old man truly, accurately, before touching his paper, or only a mess of smudges would be the result of his endeavours. And gradually, on the board, the old man began to appear as he peered and worked, peered and drew, all things forgotten save the model and the setting of him down. Then a voice said: "Repose!"

The model grunted; stretched. Some of the men left their easels, and began to scrutinise the work of their neighbours. Martin remained fixed. He watched the interested observers of the work of others pass from easel to easel. The first of these, coming near him, saw that he was a stranger, and deflected from his course. The second did the same, perhaps seeing, also, signs of shyness in the newcomer. A third, whose appearance was at least not repellent to Martin, paused before his attempt, half closed his eyes at it, nodded a commendatory nod and said: "I like it; it has character!" Another followed suit. "H'm, character," he echoed. A third was now advancing—and Martin did not like him. He gave an impression of dissipation and sneers. Martin wished that he would go off at a tangent, as some of the others had done; but the wish was not gratified. The red-eyed young man bore down on him, looked at the drawing for some little time, studied Martin, looked again at the drawing, and said: "Did that chap in the glasses criticise your work?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't pay any attention to him. He's a dam fool."

Martin said nothing, and the young man moved on. But he of the glasses came back again, bringing another with him. They stood looking at the drawing together.

"Well," asked he of the glasses, "wasn't I right?"

The other nodded.

"Yes, you were. Jolly fine nervous handling."

"Pose!" cried a voice.

The model fell back into the old position while the young men resumed their places. There was some movement, some looking at one another, brief exchange of comment on the renewed pose, which the model seemed to

catch, even before he was addressed directly. He moved slightly.

"That's it!" cried several.

Martin was afire again, all eagerness, and at work. He saw, once, the model's gaze move toward him, and away again, without any other movement. That was probably when the Head returned, for suddenly he was aware of the deep voice, just at his ear: "Yes, quite good." He looked round, startled. It seemed to him, from the way the Big Man stood by his side, that he must have been there some time.

"Now there are two things you can do," said the Chief. "One is to take a duster—or your handkerchief—and flick that all off; the other is to take it home, preserve it, and look at it later on to see what you have learnt and what, in the learning, you may lose."

That was the beginning of the new life.

When he returned home his father called from The Den. He entered. Mr. Moir was sitting in his saddle-bag chair, meditatively smoking; and, to Martin's intense astonishment, there stood John, on the hearthrug, jacket pushed up behind, hands in pockets, thoughtful. They gave the impression of some understanding having been come to between them.

"Hullo, John!" amazed.

"Hullo, Martin!" relishing the amazement.

"Well," said Mr. Moir, "how did it go?"

"Splendid," Martin answered. "But what are you doing home, John?"

His brother moved a little more to the side of the hearthrug, as though to give Martin a share.

"I've just been discussing things with John," said Mr. Moir. "I telephoned this morning for him to come through and have a chat. He's coming into the business. Sit down." Martin took a chair. "I've been thinking

about you also. I don't see the sense in having two family greenhorns in the warehouse," he gave his affable twinkle, "and you won't like the counting house even as much as you liked the warehouse! Would you care to have a couple of years at the Art School?"

"You mean *all day?*"

"All day and all night if you like," replied his father. "You've always wanted to be an artist. I had another talk with Marks of Montreal yesterday about you, and he says he knows an artist in America who makes fabulous sums on his work, and Marks says that he has heard on good authority that he has much the same defect of vision as you have. He explained it to me. Funny thing it is. Some shades of green he sees only the yellow, and that seems worse than being shaky on reds! One can't touch a landscape without coming up against green. I don't know, Martin, but what, if we only knew," and he laughed, "you have a superior vision, denied to us ordinary mortals. Eh, John?" He glanced at the brother, to bring him into the conversation. "Some reds you can see, some you don't see as red but as something else; but where you should see the red you don't just see nothing at all—isn't that it? Perhaps you see more colours than we ordinary mortals?"

"I'm afraid I can't flatter myself that way," answered Martin. "In so far as colour goes it is a defect, not a—a——"

The door opened, and Mrs. Moir entered.

"May *I* come in?" she asked in a grieved voice. "I left you alone with John as I understood you wanted to discuss things. But I hear that Martin is with you now."

"Yes," said Mr. Moir. "I've just been having a long talk with John, who is coming into the business after all." Mrs. Moir had the air of one feeling ignored, but of refusing to give expression to her pique. "I have not

been consulted! I know nothing about it!" was in her manner, though not voiced.

"And now I suggest to Martin that he should have two years as an art student—a day student—at the Art School," said Mr. Moir.

Mrs. Moir folded her hands.

"What were you going to say, Martin," asked his father, "just now, before your mother came in?"

"Er—I was just going to say that after Mr. —— had looked at my sketches, he asked if I couldn't arrange to go up as a day student. He said that if I could come up for two years as a day student he hoped that at the end of that time I could be an illustrator."

"Oh, an illustrator!" cried Mrs. Moir. "Drawing for the magazines!"

"Well," said the father, "I've been hearing this very day of a black-and-white artist—and illustrator—who gets such tall prices for his work that the magazines he works for make a point of announcing to the public what they pay him. Funny idea! If I were to stick on the top of my memorandum forms that I pay my heads of departments little fortunes——" And he smiled. "Funny thing! But go on, Martin. What else did he say? Anything else?"

"I told him that I didn't think you would give me more than the evening classes. You see, I thought you—er—only wanted me to take it up as"—he paused before the hated word—"a hobby."

Mr. Moir shot his son a look almost as if he were ashamed.

"I told him that mother wasn't keen on it at all," Martin added.

Mrs. Moir looked indignant.

"You seem to have been very communicative!" she commented.

"He was so decent—I do like him. He asked me if I hadn't any wealthy uncles or aunts."

"How very extraordinary!" cried his mother. "I am quite sure that no good will come out of this. Why should he not go into the counting house?"

"Give him a chance," said Mr. Moir, "give him a chance."

"I think," she replied, "that you are making a great mistake."

"Oh, but I say, mother!" cried Martin, as she made a movement toward the door, "look at what I did to-night. I feel as if I've learned a lot already," and he disclosed the charcoal drawing.

She looked at it calmly.

"If you are going to the Art School," she said, "you'll have to provide yourself with proper tools. That seems to me a very dirty piece of cardboard."

John took it from him and stuck it up on the mantelpiece, eyeing it like a connoisseur.

"Jolly good charcoal drawing," he remarked. "It reminds me of those old heads in the *Century Magazines* that we used to have."

"By J. W. Alexander, you mean?" Martin asked.

"Don't know who they were by."

"That's all settled, at any rate," said Mr. Moir, rising, and knocking his pipe out under the mantelshelf.

Mrs. Moir had left the room.

CHAPTER XI

JOHN was off again to Loretto, where he would remain till end of term. As eagerly almost as Martin had wanted not to go into the business did he desire to go into it, coming much farther than half-way to meet his father in the latter's talk—or "sounding," as he would have called it—regarding the young man's inclinations. The antipathy to Martin's art had been prejudicial to more than the artist! He was off again, his chief eagerness, it seemed, on his return to complete the term, being less scholastic than athletic. To perfect himself in "footer," toward the day when Loretto was to play Fettes, appeared, by his talk, to be his chief aim in life at the moment. Certainly it was his chief topic of conversation with Martin during the evening.

Next morning, having seen John joyously off to Edinburgh, Martin repaired to the School of Art, armed with his drawing-board, and felt less strange, but every whit as eager over his work. But at home something seemed to be wrong. In the succeeding days Martin could not but notice that there was some "queerness" between his father and mother. Mrs. Moir had not two words to say to her husband. There was an air of constraint, something like the air before storm, on electric days when people say: "I wish it would rain or thunder, or do something." Martin found himself keeping as quiet as a mouse, almost afraid to speak. "I'm sure I don't know" —"As you please!"—"Oh, if you say so"—"I really don't know"—"I have not been consulted." Such were Mrs. Moir's rejoinders to all Ebenezer Moir's attempts to make conversation.

About a fortnight later, over the breakfast-table, Mr. Moir turned to Martin and said: "Well, Martin, how would you like to pull an oar to-day?"

"I should love it," said Martin. "I wish we could go down to Millport instead of just out to the lake——"

His mother broke in with: "Oh, you can't go to Millport for the day!"

"I didn't mean to go out just to that model yacht pond," said Mr. Moir to Martin, ignoring his wife's remark. "I meant to go down the Clyde somewhere."

"What about the boy's studies at the School of Art?" Mrs. Moir asked—and Martin felt infinitely happy to think that she was interested after all.

"Oh, I am off colour to-day," said her husband. "I don't think I need to go into the ware'us' to-day. They'll manage all right. And Martin would be none the worse of a blow."

"Come with us, mother," Martin suggested.

"Perhaps your father would rather be alone," said she. Martin felt himself in the midst of things he could not fathom.

"Could you come?" asked Mr. Moir.

"Where do you intend to go?" she asked.

He raised his head and looked at her, met her gaze. Martin felt oddly excited.

"Millport!" answered Mr. Moir, with a note in his voice as of defiance.

It was beyond Martin. He lacked the key to all this. His mother smiled in the strangest way, and her voice was icy as she said:

"I think I'd better not. There are things to be done. I want to look after the maids to-day, and—er, no—I won't come. But thank you very much."

There was something behind it all; Martin felt it; but Mr. Moir merely cleared his throat, frowned—and took

his diary from his waistcoat pocket to see about the trains. The unexpectedness of the outing was delightful to Martin; it was the kind of thing he understood—this sudden impulse of wanting to go somewhere, and going.

"We'll just manage it," said his father. "Come along."

This was the father with whom he could pull most excellently, the father who, having charged heavily upstairs, came lumbering down presently with his big, loose Norfolk jacket on, thrusting pipe, tobacco, and matches into a pocket. Mrs. Moir was in the hall, and she watched her husband putting two sovereigns into a purse.

"You would have longer time," said she, "if you only went to Gourock. You can get boats there."

"Oh no!" replied Mr. Moir. "Too much of 'doon the watter catchin' crabs'."

"Or Wemyss Bay," said she.

"No, no. Too much Kelvingsighed about Wemyss Bay. We'll go to Millport."

"As you please," she said coldly, and when he looked at her she added: "It won't give you such a long time."

Apart from the one deep look before exploding the name "Millport!" at his wife Mr. Moir seemed to take this strained manner for granted, but to Martin there was something behind it all. He was unpleasantly affected somewhat in the same way as he was wont to be affected when his mother, in his childhood days, used to come into his room and, sitting on the edge of his cot, talk to him in the dark. Funny, thought Martin, the way his mother held up her face for Mr. Moir to dab a kiss on; it was as if she turned it into stone for him.

They hastened off.

"I think we'll be quicker," said Mr. Moir, "if we cut

across to Queen's Park Station instead of going to Mount Florida."

It was going to be a happy day. How full of promise was the morning air! What a new meaning—as they crossed Clyde in the train on the high railway bridge—had the paddle-steamers lying in the river! Mr. Moir consulted the time-table again, as the train, slowing, rattled into the station.

"Yes, down to Largs would be quicker," he said getting out before the train stopped, Martin following—and he went hammer, hammer, hammer down the long platform in haste. Taxi-cabs were not yet; they bundled into a hansom which took them speedily to Saint Enoch Station, and soon they were shooting through wet, green Renfrewshire, as if the big buffers at the platform's end were springs of a cannon that shot the trains out under the gaping end of the high glass roof. The train sped so that the sleepers of the parallel line were not individually visible, but made a blurr between the rails. When they screamed past Lochwinnoch, Martin was less soberly affected than usual by its grey, desolate, and suicidal appearance, lying amid flat, grey-green fields. It was more like a pleasant hint of the further waters to which they were to come. From Largs a little tossing paddle-steamer churned them across to Millport. They paid the pier dues, and came out into the small island town, with the two rock islands in the bay, the little curving strip of esplanade, the climbing streets. Before one of the hotels Mr. Moir paused and looked at his son.

"What do you say," he asked, "lunch first ashore, or take some grub with us?"

The boats joggled at their moorings. A fresh wind sang through the little town. The smell of seaweed, and the salt smell of the sea, and the waves swinging about the jetties, decided the matter.

"Take the grub with us," said Martin.

"Good."

So they had a picnic basket filled for them, and crossed over to the bay-side, walking as do those walk who intend to "tak' a boat." There were two boatmen with the name of Wallace in those days—one wonders if they are still there—and it had been Mr. Moir's custom to hire from them alternately. Here was one of them now, giving greeting with a wave of his hand.

"You're a stranger, Mr. Moir! Have you lost your taste for the old place?"

"How are you, Mr. Wallace? No—far from it, far from it," answered Moir. "My wife has got a little tired of it."

"Ah well, of course one must study the ladies."

"Quite, quite! Well, what can you give us?"

"How would you like that one down there now—that red-painted one?"

"Can you see the red on that, Martin?"

"Oh yes."

Wallace turned to Martin.

"This young man is a native of the place, is he not?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mr. Moir, "a native."

"And a good young oarsman, too, as I remember," Wallace remarked.

"I haven't pulled an oar for some time," said Martin.

They wandered down the jetty, some early holiday makers stopping to watch the embarkation. Mr. Moir, slouching along, hands in pockets, bent slightly to his son, and said he: "Remember your seamanship now. Let us do it in style. Evidently the suggestion of white horses makes some people look upon it as a trifle daring to go out to-day."

"All right, dad," and Martin laughed. "I won't push off with the blade!"

"That's it. I think you'd better take stroke. Now, Mr. Wallace, lines and bait," and Mr. Moir clapped his hands gleefully, and breathed deep of the sea-breeze.

"I needn't tell *you* about the tides, Mr. Moir," said Wallace, as one of his assistants came running with the mussel-bait and the leaded fishing tackles. They stepped into the boat, sat down.

"Are you ready, Martin? Now!" Up went the oars and down, and they were off, Martin feeling very greatly pleased with his father—and with himself. They fell easily into the swing. "Feather, boy, feather! That's it, that's it—splendid!"

The little group, hands in pockets at the jetty-end, waned smaller. Mr. Wallace made a movement of adieu with his arm like a semaphore falling, and turned away. The town dwindled behind the beach. The grey-blue strip of esplanade wall dwindled as they pulled out beyond the two rock islands.

"Getting the spray on the back of my neck," said Mr. Moir. "It's a little bit white out here. We'll head straight on, and then go with the waves. Dear old Millport!" On they pulled, the bow going plop, plop, plop, smash—and a dash of spray. "There now, I think we can go with the run of it. Yes—there's a bit of a breeze. That fishing boat over there has got a reef or two in."

"Look at the waves on Farland Point!" cried Martin.

"Well, we can go easier now," said his father, "and take a long slant across. What's that poem, Martin——" but the wind blew his words away.

"Eh?" shouted Martin.

"What's that poem in English literature books—you

know, it's always quoted? Always makes me think of Millport."

"Can't hear," answered Martin.

Mr. Moir shouted to him: "Something about one last look at the white-washed—white-walled—town, and the little grey church on the shore."

Martin turned his head.

"Oh! 'The Forsaken Merman,' dad."

"That's it! Always makes me think of Millport."

They pulled on into a calmer water, leaving the race of white horses, came into as it were a field of the sea that seemed as if compressed. Here was a different colour—a kind of yellow glimmer through the green and blue; and little strips of broken foam strayed over the rolling surface like veins in marble. Farther down the firth they could see the two square ruined castles—one on the mainland, one on the Little Cumbrae Isle—of which the fairy-tale tells how the giants who built them threw the one stone hammer that they used across the channel, one to the other.

"We'll try here, Martin. Just you steady. Let me see if this rope's all clear. That's all right"; and over went the anchor with a splash, Mr. Moir watching the line pay out. "Yes, that's about it," he said, when the line stopped running.

They baited their hooks, lowered the weighted lines overboard, touched bottom, and then drew up slightly. Martin turned about, his back to the stern. The lunch-basket was opened. Folk of tender appetite might not have enjoyed that lunch, for the flounders were nibbling the bait as the fishers ate their sandwiches; and the sandwiches were set down more than once while the lunchers pulled in a line, took off a flounder, and re-baited. To the inquiring fish below the bait probably tasted slightly of ham and beef sandwiches: to the

fishers, sitting high above in the little skiff, at the end of the anchor's rope, the sandwiches tasted slightly of raw, salt mussels.

"Well—how goes it, Martin?"

"Ripping!"

Mr. Moir sat munching, one hand over the gunwale holding the line, looking at the mainland off which they had anchored, surveying the strip of shingle, the steep little hills behind, the irregular tree-tufted crests with houses peeping through.

"It would look very pretty on canvas, Martin, very pretty on canvas," he said.

Martin looked at it all without a word, then nodded.

"It's jolly," said he at last. "But do you know what I prefer?"

"No. What's that?"

"Did you notice as we came down Wallace's jetty all that little cluster of boats nosing together, and the painters stretching from the bows of each of them to an iron ring ashore? I wish I could draw that!"

Mr. Moir considered his son from under the turned-down hat-brim.

"It would be very difficult, I should think," he said. "It would be a pretty stiff exercise in knowledge of perspective. If you got one of the boats a little bit off, or even one of the gunwales"—he twinkled at his son—"bang would go the whole bag of tricks!"

Language of this kind was not used at home. The vagabond mood might be evident in Mr. Moir there, but not the care-free language. He fell into a brown study, gave a little sigh, or half-sigh, and a grunt of "Aye, aye!"

"Millport from the bay is very fine," he said presently.

Farland point, from where they were now anchored,

hid Millport and Millport Bay; but the scene was in Martin's mind's eye.

"Look at that, though!" he cried. "Look at how the end of the Wee Cumbrae stands up against that queer cloud."

Mr. Moir liked the use of *Wee* Cumbrae. It took him there more heartily than did *Little* Cumbrae. He looked in the direction his son indicated. Strange things were happening in the blent seascape and landscape. This up-river side of the Little Cumbrae went dark, with just a wedge or two of pallid light on it here and there, where a rib of rock protruded. High overhead the clouds seemed as if moored; but a scattered flock of lower clouds was amazingly evident against these high and dark ones. Little clouds, little filmy clouds (detached, like dotted rocks going out to sea beyond a headland) scurried before some middle current of air; and they were all lit, as if with internal glory of their own, lit with fine gold. No sun-rays were evident, just these small lit clouds, hurrying low across the sky. Both sat looking upwards without a word.

"Aye," said Mr. Moir at last, after some rearrangement of the dark back-cloths beyond Cumbrae had put an end to this amazing effect, "aye, boy, that was a great sight. Even the biggest artist could never come to an end of his 'prenticeship."

Then he fell brooding again, only withdrawn from his brooding when another flounder was caught. He seemed to forget the turn of the tide. The son did not; but not for worlds would Martin remind his father of it. There must be no suggestion of funk. Suddenly Mr. Moir started. The bottom of the boat was banked with fish. He looked out at the waters of the channel.

"Gad!" he broke out. "We'll have to pull! Didn't you notice it?"

"I left it to you," said Martin easily, though pulling in his line with precipitancy, now that the father had come back from his frowning and deep reveries. The anchor was weighed, and they started again for Millport.

"It's not so bad," said Martin, stretching at his oar.

"Wait a bit," warned Mr. Moir, looking over his shoulder; "save yourself, boy. This is where it begins. Feel that? Take it easy." "That" was the beginning of the current. There was no doubt of the undertug at the boat; and it was whole-hearted rowing that began now. They put weight on every pull. "Take it easy, Martin, take it easy. You must save yourself yet."

"I've got to put it all on already!" said Martin.

Slowly they crept on, but at the turn of Farland Point they ceased to make any headway. If either so much as turned to glance over the bows, back they went; they had simply to sit tight and row, row, row, so as to remain even where they were.

"Damn!" exploded Mr. Moir at last. "We can't make an inch. It's tide and wind, you see."

"I think I could do a desperate spurt," Martin declared.

"All right," answered his father, "give it to her!"

They pulled strenuously, in a fresh endeavour, and inch by inch rounded the point. There! They made way better now. There seemed to be only one pleasure boat out in the bay, a reefed lug-sail, with one occupant enjoying himself in the stern. On the shore road pedestrians had stopped to watch him, and them, and now moved slowly on, seeing that the rowers were at last victorious.

"We can take it easier now," said Mr. Moir. "There are some things we can't do, eh Martin? And one of these impossible things is to take a boat out from Millport for the day and have to land on the mainland because of the tide. We cannot take a boat out of Millport for the

day, leave her to be called for at Largs, and send a telegram over to the island announcing the fiasco, and go home with our tails between our legs! How are your hands?"

"Blistered a bit. That's nothing! It was great!"

They came in under the lee of the two rock islands, on the windward side of which waves were surging up and spattering down. A little group of people deployed down the jetty to see them land.

"And there goes the steamer!" exclaimed Mr. Moir. "We've got to stay the night."

Martin did not deeply regret it—neither, he gathered from the intonation, despite its exclamatory pitch, did his father. They landed with burning hands, beaming and tired, and strung their fish together, presenting Mr. Wallace with one bunch, and taking the other with them to find a hotel and have it cooked. There Mr. Moir dispatched a telegram to set his wife's mind at rest against their non-arrival at night. It was while they were enjoying the flounders, in a dining-room looking out on the bay, that a steamer whistle sounded.

"Yacht?" asked Mr. Moir, clutching his napkin on his knee, half rising and craning his neck to look out.

The waiter, standing in the corner beside the window, answered: "No, sir—it's the steamer."

"Passenger steamer?"

"Yes, sir."

"For up river?"

"Yes, sir."

"I didn't know! I thought we'd lost the last one."

"She's just on this month," the man explained. "They begin running round to Kilchattan Bay again this month."

"I see. Oh well, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. You've sent off the wire for me, have you?"

"Yes, sir."

There were no pierrots or banjoists at Millport then, though perhaps there are now. The attractions were boating, walking, golfing on the links above the town. They strolled out in the twilight, when lights twinkled all round the bay, and strung out sparkling up the hill. The pavements were hauntingly fresh and clean under the beginning of the night. Lighthouses flashed, and darkened and flashed again in the firth. Little Cumbrae rose awesomely out of the unseen sea, the murmur of which sighed and echoed in the streets of the little town. They came back very healthily sleepy to the hotel, each carrying a suit of pyjamas. From a great pyramid of carpet slippers in a corner of the commercial room they each selected a pair to suit, and went to bed. Martin lay awake for a while, and listened to the unfamiliar sounds of the sea swishing, and of feet tapping past on the pavements below his window.

In the middle of the night he awoke. The tapping of heels had wholly ceased. There was no sound but the waves, making their mighty music on the key-board of the beach. He rose, sleep in his eyes, to see what was to be seen, and there was the depopulated little town, with lights out, glimmering pale under the stars, the waves revealing themselves in the darkness by their white tops coming up and going down. "Great world! Great world!" he said sleepily, and groped back to bed. When he awoke in the morning and, looking out, saw the sparkling water, sparkling rocks, the washed and windy esplanade, he wished that they could stay longer.

"I think," said his father, meditating on the view, hands on hips at the window, "we may as well stay for the day, but we won't lose the last boat to-night."

They went down and breakfasted.

"What do you say to the Wee Cumbrae, Martin?"

"Jolly!"

"Might take your mother home a sea-urchin! Let us have a basket, will you, waiter?"

"I can give you a little spirit kettle, sir. It will save you making a fire."

"Eh, Martin?" Mr. Moir left that point to his son's decision.

The waiter beamed and bowed, recognising the boyishness in this big man, and his thought for his boy.

"A fire," said Martin.

"Good!" And Mr. Moir laughed gaily.

"I can lend you a nice kettle, sir. I'll get it all ready for you."

So they rowed across to Little Cumbrae, hiring the boat for to-day's row from "the other Mr. Wallace," in pursuance of Mr. Moir's old-time habit when holidaying here. In the lee of the Little Cumbrae they found the sea fairly smooth.

"I think we can go close," said Mr. Moir, looking up at the gloomy precipice that comes down sheer into the water. "Now this takes care, remember," he cautioned. "There's more motion in this swell along the cliffs than you'd imagine."

There was something eerie about those clammy cliffs. Rowing gently along at a couple of oars' length off, Martin felt something like horror of them stirring in him. Averting his eyes from them he looked over the boat's side, and far below were forests of seaweed, brown, red, green, and yellowy green, stretching up toward the surface, as trees stretch to the sky. Melancholy and lonely-sounding plip-plops were going on all along cliff, sounding and echoing, as they had sounded and echoed, thought Martin, for ages. The place was strangely thrilling and awesome. Martin glanced at his father—who was watching him.

"You don't funk it, do you, Martin?"

"Well—I don't think it's funk exactly," the boy answered, looking a trifle foolish.

"That's all right, then," said his father; "sort of gruesome away down there."

"It's all so quiet," said Martin; "and when these sounds come from alongshore it makes me feel—I don't know. Like the Forsaken Merman!" he finished.

"But look at the ripples of the boat," said Mr. Moir. "There's some man paints nothing else but that sort of thing, isn't there?—boys bathing——"

"Tuke!" cried Martin. "He's always doing it—nothing else. One could look at it all day to see how it should be done."

"Tuke no good?" Mr. Moir asked, raising his head, and smiling at his son a pawky smile.

"Oh, I suppose he's all right, but he goes on painting scuddy boys and reflections of boats as if it was a habit."

His father grunted and chuckled.

"Hullo! There's a sea-urchin," he said, looking down into the water again. "Just you fend off, Martin, and let me see if I can get it on to the blade of my oar."

It was a long and ticklish operation, but eventually the small, spiky ball was in the boat.

"And there's another!" exclaimed Mr. Moir.

"Won't one do, dad?"

Again his father looked sharply at him.

"Funking an upset?" he asked.

"I wouldn't like a spill here," Martin confessed. "There's no place to land. It would be like being in a tank! But anyhow, as soon as you get the urchins out the colour of them all goes. The moment you take them out of the water it's all gone—absolutely all gone."

"You're quite right. It is so."

They pulled on towards the grassy promontory on which the ruined castle stood, and above it, a farmhouse.

"Carry the anchor well up, Martin. Adventurers must never maroon themselves. Here you are—catch the kettle. Whoa! Steady! Gad! that seaweed's slippery! Here's the basket."

High upon the beach they gathered dry driftwood, where tiny black flies bobbed and jumped on the shingle and a manifold insect life was going on. They lit their fire among some rocks, and talked about Jules Verne's *Abandoned,* and the *The Secret of the Island*—or at least Martin did. His father sat cross-legged beside the driftwood fire, looking over at Millport with far-away gaze, a far-away gaze that had nothing to do with the focusing to the distant view. Martin felt he should not interrupt these reveries; he stopped speaking.

"What were you saying?" asked Mr. Moir at once.

Martin returned to Jules Verne. But hardly had he begun to talk again than his father's thoughts removed. It was evident that he was far away, neither on this island of Little Cumbrae nor upon the mysterious island of Jules Verne. Martin leant back upon an elbow and looked out at the sea, and Mr. Moir sat like a Viking in Norfolk jacket; and the sun shone overhead, tempering the spring day, warming the breeze.

"I'll never be able to convince her," said Mr. Moir, in the voice somewhat as of one talking in sleep, "if it's lasted all these years. I thought it was forgotten—forgotten—that queer fancy."

Martin looked at his father, and wondered. "What did you say, dad?" was almost on his lips, but he recognised that this was monologue. His father started—cast aside some mental weight, drew forth his pipe, lit it with an ember from the fire, and fell into talk—a causerie on islands, Juan Fernandez and the Falklands, and the

island of Knight's treasure hunt, on which land crabs scuttle over each other with a sound of crackling, so numerous are they.

But the day slipped by: afternoon light and shadow on the water, shadows of the afternoon stretching out on the green slopes of the Greater Cumbrae, a melancholy look on the cliffs here, on Lesser Cumbrae, visible from where they sat on their promontory, all reminded them that they were sophisticated people who did not sleep where night overtook them; they had to pull back to Millport—and very soon again they were on the deck of the paddle steamer that carried them over to the mainland, and the train for the city. The reception that awaited them at Queensholme clearly set Mr. Moir at ease; but Martin was oddly restless under that gushing welcome. A smile from his father seemed to have roots deep down, seemed to be the outward sign of an inward bonhomie. But this radiant welcome of his mother's, in comparison, was as tin beside silver, brass beside gold. Her radiance seemed not to shine through, but to be applied to the surface. "Ah, this is good. She has got over her mood," was evident in Mr. Moir's gratified, almost grateful, salutation on her cheek. Martin felt no more at ease than does a dog spoken to in fawning tones by the vivisectionist. But his own eagerness to bestow his pleasure upon others, his artist's love of giving, soon counterbalanced the shyness that his instinct thrust on him before her effusion. He told of the glorious outing, and, once upon the theme, he was like a stream in spate. He told of the hard pull off Farland point, of the golden clouds sailing under the dark sky, of the lug-sail scudding in the bay, of the flounders, of the flounder tea.

"And we could have got home after all," he said, "if

we had known that the steamer we saw going out wasn't the last one."

"Oh, then there was a later one?" she asked, and there was that curious tightness of her mouth again.

"Yes—we had just sat down to tea when it whistled."

She gave a little nod and stiffened. That was the mother he half dreaded, while he loved; the mother whose caresses he did not like. Mr. Moir glanced at her and saw that they were back again into the growing atmosphere of acerbity that, he had hoped, and believed, had been dispelled.

"Well, we couldn't leave the old place *rushing*," said he. "It would have been a rush then, and we might have lost the steamer as it was."

He intended this as a quashing of the returning unpleasantness, but Mrs. Moir appeared to look upon it as either lame apology or poor excuse. She made no response, and Martin fell to wondering why she seemed to bear Millport a grudge. Some day, perhaps, he might learn the significance of Millport. He loved her deeply—but she puzzled him deeply. The older he grew the more did he find her puzzling.

CHAPTER XII

THERE was one person whose appreciation, and the impetus of whose sympathy, Martin desired. And that person was his puzzling yet beloved mother. If he had inquired into himself he might have found that he desired nothing more ardently. He used often to be visited by picture after picture of his childhood's days with her, pictures that made him thus love her, in face of her growing enmity to his aims, now that he was of an age to have an aim in life. He remembered the incident of the toy gun and the jammed bullet, in search of incidents in which he saw her loving and beloved. He set off these pictures (for he considered his life in pictures) against her attitude of to-day, her disinterestedness, even more difficult to bear than the earlier definitely voiced objections. He even wondered sometimes—when waking in the middle of the night, and finding all quiet, and thinking over his life—if he should discard his wish to be an artist so as to please her. He surmised, or felt, without knowing exactly how he had come by the feeling, that she disbelieved the story of the colour-blindness, perhaps because of the way she had as of trying to take him by surprise so often with: "What's this colour, Martin?"—or "Can you see these shades as different?" He hated the word "colour-blindness"; it was a lying word. Bitterly he considered that those people who never used their eyes at all (those people who, about in the streets or the fields, were as really blind-folk—those people who, entering a picture gallery, could not tell, as he, at a glance, from whose hand

each picture came) would gloat over him with the word, "Colour-blind!" if they knew of his defect. His mother's antipathy set him off in embittered imaginings. He was relieved when Mr. Moir mentioned that Marks, over again from Montreal, had been asking after him and his progress at the School of Art. But this, alas, was not until six months had elapsed, Mr. Mark's visits being semi-annually. Mrs. Moir had believed, during these six months (in spite of her temporary conviction at the oculist's, and in spite of a further assurance, of which we shall hear), that Martin had invented the story, and had looked upon herself as a mother whose son had attempted to trick her out of her ambition for him. So she allowed her husband's talk of Marks and the colour-blindness, as the saying is, to go in at one ear and come out at the other. She had discredited it to herself too long; she could not admit it now.

And still Martin loved her. He loved her for what she was not—enthroning and glorifying her in a way perhaps more commonly practised towards mistresses than towards mothers. But the farther he went from childhood (when all that was asked of him was to be obedient), the farther he advanced into knowledge of his own individuality—and there was a big stride taken by him after going to the Art School—the less did his mother's "mother-love" seem a sacred thing; the less did it seem, anon, even a human thing.

As time passed, and he discovered that his affection for her was esteemed lightly by her because it had not risen to her test of affection—which was sacrifice on the part of the protester of love—as time passed, and her acerbity toward all that concerned art grew more evident, he developed no anger—only regret. Doubtless it was out of his own consciousness and experience that he was able, one day, to astonish the Life Class, to arrest them

with the aptness of a phrase, and the clarity of a thought not designed for those who love lies. So far he had not been esteemed by the Life Class as at all an epigrammatic talker, though an excellent listener—one with understanding. They had been talking of Whistler's portrait of Carlyle, recently acquired by the Glasgow Corporation. One Henderson (who eventually became a fashionable portrait-painter) said: "I'm rather surprised at a man like Whistler repeating himself—setting down Carlyle against a wall in imitation of his portrait of his mother."

"Oh, but don't you know?" said one Alexander, a young man of promise, who died before the promise was fulfilled, "Carlyle admired the arrangement of the mother so much that he specially desired to sit like that."

Gordon, of the lean, shaven face, and the pince-nez, in a voice of immense relief, just edged with a touch of banter, broke out: "I say Alexander, how fortunate that you knew that!"

Henderson seemed annoyed, but his annoyance was hid by another talker, a young man who always wanted to be heard; he now declaimed: "Whistler's portrait of his mother is the greatest tribute to mother-love that has ever been painted."

This sort of talk, even when true, causes a shudder among most young men. There was a faint shudder now.

"I say," began the young man again hotly (eventually he became an art critic—one of the most to be admired, seeing that at least he had tried to draw, at least had once in his lifetime had a piece of charcoal in his hand, and got down, with that, something of what he saw), "I say that Whistler's portrait of his mother——"

"It would be pleasant to believe you," Martin broke in abruptly, "but I think it is rather the most excellent example of a son's devotion."

Alexander turned his head and gave him an odd penetrating look; Henderson wagged his head and said: "Excellent! Rightly put!" Then nodding towards The Young Man Who Wanted To Be Heard, he added dryly (prophetically, too, without knowing): "Though the remark of our Art Causerist friend upon my right must be infinitely more popular."

"Pose!" cried the monitor, and the group dispersed, each man to his easel, each man meditating this little chat that had been chatted while the model had rested. There were many such formative discussions in which some young man gave voice to an idea that was as a springboard to the minds of his hearers. Not by any means was art all their theme. Life interested many as deeply as did art—life, and how it should be lived. For most of them were of an age at which they sought to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of lies, that later, for the sake of company, most would give in to—and some even for the sake of ovation re-state, lies being popular.

The Big Man's criticisms were a great matter. He taught not Art alone, but Life. He seemed to have a knack of saying the right thing to each man. It was to a very proper youth, about whom the report was circulated—though it could not be proved—that he had once been seen entering a Young Men's Christian Association building, that the Big Man commented, quietly, stretching the tips of his well-manicured fingers towards this pupil's shoulders, but forbearing to touch him: "Young man, I do not know what the cause may be—whether it be faulty vision or excessive modesty, perchance an unconscious tinge of prudery, but I notice there is always the same lack of proportion in your studies of women. A lady, I would briefly draw your attention to the fact, does possess a belly." And thereafter the suggestion of famine was no longer the most striking part of that

young man's female studies. It was to Martin that he once said, upon a day when that young man, while he worked, had been brooding upon the unchanging austerity of his mother, thus distracting his concentration: "Yes. Exquisite lines—lines of an etcher. Sensitive and virile"; Martin's young chest might have inflated slightly at that, but there was a hint in the voice of something to follow; and it came: "You will never lose that gift. Kindly turn your paper round and begin to *draw* upon the other side." And thereafter there was more determination in Martin's eye—to set down what he saw, to represent with accuracy.

It was a pleasure to Martin to hear little Edwards—who had "run away from home to be an artist," and had his fees paid here, so rumour said, out of the Big Man's pocket—it was a pleasure to hear him tell how he made "bread and cheese," as the phrase is for existing, and came by scraps of canvas and fag ends of tubes and paint, and shillings to pay for his bedroom, by sweeping out the studio of ——, and lighting the stove for him in the mornings.

Edwards was privileged. His method for supplying himself with drawing requisites was to confiscate a board here, filch a sheet of paper from another board yonder, cull four drawing pins from four other boards, one from each. Upon one occasion, indeed, somebody observed him at this employ, passed round a whispering comment among the others, with the result that when Edwards came strutting boldly to his easel to put the board in place, he found the eyes of everybody upon him. His half-sheepish, half-brazen expression set the room in a roar. Some time after, a late-comer was seen to be anxiously searching among the drawing-boards that leant against the wall. There were always one or two there, the property of men who were absent. His grumblings

and gruntings in the corner at last brought many quiet chuckles from the young men already at work, and the searcher came forth into the full glare of light.

"I'm afraid I've got your board," said Edwards sweetly, and began to declaim:

> "The good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

And having declaimed he said: "I wonder if you would mind using one of these other boards for to-night—because I've started."

There was heaving of chests, more chuckling.

"Not at all, not at all," answered the young man whose board had been filched, "so long as you do not look on my leniency of to-night as establishing your right to appropriate the board to-morrow." And so saying he went over to the wall and took another of the disengaged boards.

"I have a fine point to put to you, Edwards," said Gordon presently, in a friendly but fleering tone. "If the owner of that board that Thomson has now taken should arrive late and demand it——"

Edwards turned round ecstatic.

"Never meet trouble half-way," he said. "You're a jolly decent crowd. I shall reward you during the next rest by reciting a poem of Kipling's."

Martin tried to interest his mother in such doings, but she did not greatly appreciate them. His desire to share with her was no sign to her of the affection she demanded, nor did she find, in these stories of his life among his fellows, any evidence that he was, as she once wished he would be, sociable. In the society she gathered round her in Queensholme it seemed impossible to

arouse his enthusiasm. From his mother's point of view he was still "unsociable." Yet how could he be at home in a society impervious to ideas, a society steadfast in belief in itself? It was a society whose young ladies heard only of Robert Browning when the minister started a Browning Society, and immediately turned the poet into a species of church work; a society in which one could hear, as Martin did once, in his mother's drawing-room, a young lady (greatly prized because she had graduated) say of a copper jug: "It is very pretty. It is, of course, machine made. It could not be done so well by hand." It was a society in which Ralph Waldo Trine was esteemed The Goods (if the expression is permissible) and Ralph Waldo Emerson was unknown. It was a society with no First Principles, unless its utter belief in its own weight and value was a First Principle.

It is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at that when Martin told his mother of Edwards and the drawing-boards, she failed to see how sociable the School was. So far she had let him talk and contented herself by listening coldly. But hearing a story such as that she expressed an opinion. It was everybody's duty, she said, to report Edwards to the Head Master. He was mean and impecunious; he should be sent back to his parents. Martin stared, amazed. He had no more stories to tell—and he felt it was hopeless to attempt an explanation. To proselytisers nothing can be explained—not even what is of value in their own creeds. Martin's pleasure in such episodes was to Mrs. Moir childish. She had no praise, but always, if only he spoke long enough, she had censure, or that most deadly thing called faint-praise. So he ceased to speak of the things for which he cared. But then, of course, as our most popular writers are constantly telling us, every man is a child to a woman—she can see no farther perhaps, though they do not give that

explanation—and perhaps it is to be said in Mrs. Moir's defence (at this stage at least) that it may have been lack of capacity to see more deeply, instead of lack of desire, that made the great Romance of the life that her son now lived seemed to her flat, stale, nothing at all, or at best a matter for condemnation.

In her sweetest moods now, he having grown clam-like, when she picked up a drawing she might say: "What is this meant for, Martin? Oh yes. Oh, that is quite nice. I see."

Formerly the phrase had been: "Don't trouble me for a moment, I've some correspondence to attend to;" or "Well really, I'm not interested, Martin!"

It will be remembered what stress the Big Man had put, when apportioning Martin's hours, upon the fact that what he said was: "Three days in the Antique, and two in the Life"—not two in the Antique, and three in the Life. He had been greatly pleased to find that Martin had come to the school as a day student, but had made no fresh order regarding the portioning out of the study. A month in the Antique, however, was all that Martin felt he could stand. Daringly he came to spend three days in the Life Class, two in the Antique. Anon he absented himself altogether from the Antique, but, thought he, "If I do five days a week in the Life, the Chief cannot fail to notice the fact. I had better go three days to the Life and stay away altogether for two days." He did so, and found no difficulty in enjoying these off-days. Some of them he spent in the Corporation Galleries, sitting long before some great picture, such as Whistler's "Carlyle," or the "Sensation d'Italie" of Corot, till that work became more and more wonderful, and he felt himself in the landscape, breathing the upland air, looking down upon the deep blue Mediterranean. How intensely quiet the Gallery was at such

times, how distant were the sounds of the street! In a mood like that of the Chinese philosopher who, from dreaming he was a butterfly, awoke and said: "Now, am I Soshi who has dreamed that he is a butterfly, or am I a butterfly, dreaming that I was Soshi?" he would come down into Sauchiehall Street, feeling almost stunned, unable to believe in the jangling horse-cars, the crowds, the throng upon the pavements. He understood what Wilson meant by saying: "An artist who does not read is only another part of a drawing-board." That picture by Corot was to him, as to Corot, less a bit of Italy than an upland of wind-tossed trees "where Orpheus and where Homer are." And in that delectable land he had been wandering.

Some of these off days he spent afield with his sketch-book, putting down the ramifications and aspirations of trees. He could not have told his mother—would have been doubtful about telling his father—and doubtful enough even about telling John—how when he went to sketch a certain tree he always raised his hat to it before making a stroke of his pencil; how he doffed again as, sketch-book under arm, he departed. There were men in the Life Class whom he knew would have understood, though he could not have told them. But at last the Big Man discovered how he apportioned his days.

"By the way," he said—"um, er—I forget your name——"

"Moir."

"Oh yes, Moir. Pray do not understand any rudeness. I always remember you are the young man who did the drawing of the hazing skipper, and the portrait of a beech tree; the young man who was delightfully definite about not asking a rich uncle for aid. The name is nothing. Moir. Moir. Well, are you not spending three days a week in the Life?"

"Yes, I am."

"And the other two?"

"I don't come in at all," said Martin.

"I thought so. I am not blind to everything except the drawings on the easels when I walk through the Antique Room. But, if you feel that way, why humour me? Have you been taught too well the sad art of suffering? There are men in this Life Class that I sometimes feel inclined to send down to the Perspective Room, to say nothing of the Antique. But you should have come to me with your objections, and with more drawings for me to look over when considering your plaint. You need not tell it to me now. I know it, I know them all. I suggest that you take yourself up entirely to this top flat, and that, further, you decide for yourself which room you will go into. If there are two models on—one in the Lecture Theatre, and one in the Life Room—make your choice."

Moir's eyes brightened with pleasure, for the Big Man did not talk like this to the unworthy! He must believe in Martin to talk so. So once again the young man had his five days a week at school. But now all were spent in drawing from the Life. He had found it necessary (self-protectingly) for some time now to show none of his work to his mother. But one day, as she meditated over his growing aloofness from her, her mother's heart, as she said, grieved; and going to his room she searched for, and discovered and examined for herself, many drawings that he had stored away there. At first she was disappointed in her search, but soon she had proof that he had had good cause to cease showing his work to her! And to Mr. Moir, that evening, she carried a sheaf of drawings, drawings of nude girls, laid them on his table, and said: "What do you think of these?"

He looked at them slowly.

"They seem very good," he passed opinion at last as she waited.

"Good!" she said in a low voice. "I think it is terrible. He once showed me a drawing of an old man. I thought it was a lay figure. But these are real girls."

"Yes, my dear, undoubtedly. I don't think that very terrible. They must learn anatomy, you know."

"Oh, that is rubbish! Anatomy can be taught from skeletons. This is an indignity to womanhood! It makes me feel ashamed to think that my son—" She broke off. "And it's bad for him."

"Bad for him, do you think?" said Mr. Moir, looking up.

"It's most obnoxious, worse than vivisection. And my son!"

"My dear, my dear——"

"I think it is criminal—young girls like that."

"Now that's strange," said her husband. "Funny thing! I never thought of it as anything but quite all right except over that old man—though I didn't like to say anything about it, seeing he was just at the beginning of things—and it might have damped his ardour. It struck me as pathetic—an old man, a very old man too, with a long beard like Aaron, sitting naked for a lot of young fellows to make sketches of him. Now that did strike me as pathetic."

"That's just it. He was a man! I was at Lady Sporran's the other day. She is starting a Morality Crusade. She said that men——"

"Oh, that woman's a bletherskate—she's got nothing else to do," he said.

"It's not right to your son," said Mrs. Moir, ignoring his insulting comment on her friend, and left him.

When Martin came home he was closeted for some time alone with his father.

"Have a cigar if you like," said Mr. Moir. "I want to have a chat. Rather have your pipe? All right. Glad you don't smoke cigarettes. I want to talk to you. Your mother is worrying about you, and although I don't see the matter at all as she sees it, she has made me worry a little bit too. At any rate, I want to ask you something. It's the ethics of this drawing from the nude business. Look here, Martin, you tell me—as man to man—is it all right?"

Their eyes met and stayed, and Mr. Moir read honesty in his son's glance.

"I know what you mean, dad. I'll put it to you in a nut-shell. We're drawing; we're interested in drawing; there's never anything of the kind that you suggest."

"Well, I'm glad you don't get indignant, my boy. Glad you take it this way."

"Oh, that's all right, dad. I don't mind—not the way you speak. I'll tell you: once, only once, did I see anything of that kind. We had been drawing one girl for a fortnight—nude. Some of the fellows stuck in one place all the time. I was moving round every day, or every other day and doing fresh poses. However—that's not the point. What I was going to say was that up came the Chief and said: 'Look here, you men, we get some grants, or something or other of the kind, from Kensington. They want to see what you can do in the way of a draped figure.' And he got out a sort of toga business, and arranged it round her. Well——"

His father, keenly following, suddenly showed a flutter of his eyes.

"Well," said Martin, "he draped her, and then stepped back to see what he thought of it, and what we thought of it. 'How's that?' he asked us. 'Seems to be all right.' He looked at one or two of the big guns to see if the arrangement appealed to them. They

seemed to think it was all right, but nobody started work. The Chief had another look at her, and then said: 'Oh, I see,' and stepped up and changed the drapery a little, and then we all began to draw."

"Yes—I think I see what you mean," said Mr. Moir.

"Oh, you've just got to see what I mean, dad," cried Martin, almost excitedly. "It is an answer to your question!"

Mr. Moir rose as if looking for his pipe.

"Yes," he answered. "I see what you mean. The way she was draped was so dam tricky, you mean, Martin? And the point of your story is that you had been drawing this very girl nude for a fortnight, and she might have been the Madonna all the time?"

"That's it, dad," said Martin, with a look of admiration. "And the way she was draped that day, before the Chief spotted it—it would have made the hottest cover for *Flabbergast* that you ever saw. And the men didn't like it."

His father sat down and looked in the fire. It burned quietly, with a large lump of coal showing a charring red glow beneath.

"Funny thing now, Martin," he said. "Funny thing. You can tell me this, and it is excellent. But I'll be hanged if I can tell your mother!" He sat and pondered his own thoughts for a little while. "Yes, thanks for your straightness." He nodded—then had a further thought, though the matter was really settled. "The classes are not, of course, mixed, in drawing from the Life, are they—men and women drawing together?" He felt a little doubtful about asking the question. He had half suspected himself of prurience over his former question. Yet now he sincerely hoped that Martin would say that they were not mixed—because it would

be rather a steep bit of work to assure himself that that condition of affairs could be quite as frank.

"No," said Martin.

"No—I should think not," said Mr. Moir. He smote the coal with a poker. "Are the women models respectable, Martin?"

"I believe most of the French and Italian ones are," Martin replied (with just a touch of "There! That is something to swallow for a mortal Briton!"). "But I don't know. I can only give another instance. One of the girls, when she comes out from the dressing-room, always looks frightfully pained. I used to think to myself: 'Poor girl, she doesn't like doing this.' Some of us were discussing the models one day, and I mentioned that I felt sorry for this girl; she didn't seem cut out for it. There's a man Alexander there—a very decent sort. He shook his head at me and said: 'That pained expression is the most frightful rot. It makes me squirm. It's so dishonest, too. She's the only—er, fast one—or allegedly fast one—that we have posing for us!' "

Mr. Moir blew out a breath; Martin observed that his father was flushed, and suddenly discovered that he too was flushed. Perhaps the room was hot.

"I don't know," said Mr. Moir, slow and perturbed. "I don't know. Your mother will be difficult. She wants you to give it up."

"Oh!" said Martin quietly, in a sort of casual tone—as if he were even less interested in his mother's views on this head than she in art. He felt anger at his mother. She made him feel unpleasant. She harped too much, as it were, upon fig-leaves. She made him feel dirty. Her thought was not for him but of her sex. "Why," he thought, "does she not want to know if men pose to the women?" He nearly broke out with: "I'd rather be a woman posing nude to men than a man posing

to women. One of our men models has told me a few little anecdotes about posing for women." But he did not. He kept silent over the emotions of resentment in his heart—emotions he did not fully understand.

When he left his father's den a little later he passed into the hall, uncertain what to do. Then he went up to his own room. The maid had lit a peep of gas, and he did not turn it up. He sat down on the edge of his bed to wonder what ailed his mother, to wonder why she should so ceaselessly object to him. Then he rose and turned out the gas altogether, because there were stars outside, and their glimmer, now that his eyes were accustomed to the room, was sufficient. He thrust the skylight up to its topmost capacity, and sat down again, the cool wind blowing in on him. Suddenly he was aware of his door opening, and a voice saying: "Martin, are you lying down? Oh—I see you. Martin, I have come up to talk to you—your father does not seem to have understood. Do you not see that it is your duty——"

Suddenly he blazed. The calm, stony face in the doorway was like a face in a nightmare. He wheeled round. The voice went on, his mother advancing:

"If, instead of coming up here to sit and brood and imagine yourself wronged," she said, "you would see that it is your mother—a mother much older than you——"

There was just the stony face, and the voice full of unshakable belief. Would to God he was as sure of himself! He rose, and in a kind of low shriek, he said:

"Get out of my room, damn you!"

CHAPTER XIII

Robert Wilson was at his ablutions. He always did the lower half first, so as to be able to take in the milk, which came at six. He had taken it in, and was now douching his head and torso. In moments of pleasure he invariably sang the one ditty, or fragment of ditty, with which we are now conversant. Martin, coming to the top landing, heard the laving of water, and the spluttering voice carolling: "And now I am happy all the day, all the day." He advanced down the corridor, pressed the bell; and there was dead silence within. He rang again, but still there was silence. He put his mouth to the keyhole and spoke: "Wilson! Wilson!" The door opened, opened wide, and Wilson in shirt and trousers gave entrance.

"Come in," he said. "I thought it was some emissary or spy from the landlord. There was a clause in our agreement that I was not to sleep here. What's the matter with you? You look *distrait!*"

"I've been up all night."

"What! Our honourable and shy Martin Moir! This must go in the book! Please don't come to me as to a father confessor!"

"No, no! I've been out in the country all night. I've been half mad trying to settle things."

"Oh! Oh, I beg your pardon. This is the Agony in the Garden. I thought at first it had to do with the Oatfield. Where have you been?"

"Everywhere. I've been out at Giffnock Quarries, out to the Mearns, across the old paths that I haven't

been on since I played truant from school once, over to the Brother's Loch."

"Gad, how old it makes me feel!" said Wilson. "I used to go up there and guddle for trout when I was a boy—"—he paused—"five years ago," he added. "I remember a chap called MacNaughten—I don't know if you remember him—he was at our school?"

"Yes, I remember him well."

"He and I went out to the Mearns Moors to see what camping out was like there. He was Canada-mad, you know, and wanted to test himself to see if he could face a rigorous winter. I should think he could stand an Arctic blizzard all right. We enjoyed it tremendously—couldn't move our hands for the cold. I was laid up with bronchitis; he went to Canada. I never hear about him now. Wonder how he's getting on. So you were out there last night?"

"Yes, right up on the top of the hill above the Brother's Loch, at one o'clock this morning."

"You've been doing it! It's a pretty high hill anyway, if it's not a mountain. And what did you pray for, old man?"

"Don't know if I prayed exactly. I just wandered about on the top. Look at my boots. Look at my trousers. I hope you don't mind me coming to you like this."

"Oh, rot! This isn't a drawing-room. What has been making you want to be apologetic?"

"I swore at my mother last night," said Martin tragically.

"Um! That's very distressing," said Wilson slowly. "Very distressing. You seem to have stayed at home too long; or to have been very long-suffering. I suppose it's the old story. Your people, I take it, are proper, well-meaning, attend church, listen to prayers, the requests of which are made in the name of Him who

said: 'Take no anxious thought for the morrow . . .' but they hate you acting upon that, and want you to stick to business, to lead a shameless life of seeking after the temporal, and to be laid away at last with a tombstone on your chest announcing to the world that you were a highly respected money-grubber. They have been at it again, have they? I thought they were giving you a rest."

Martin told as much as he could of the strained relations of recent days, of the incidents of the previous night, incidents that had led up to that outburst, even to himself astounding. He told (while Wilson shaved and dressed) of a fevered, nocturnal tramping on the high waste-places beyond the sleeping city.

"The trouble is," said Wilson at last, "that you do not revere the things that your mother—excellent lady—reveres so much that she would have you revere them too. She can't see that her authority is not your authority. Do you ever go to church?"

"I haven't gone for some time, and that seems to worry her too."

"Well, you see, that complicates things," said Wilson. "At least she visibly worships, and to all appearances is questing after, the Holy Grail. You are not. And further—you are not building up a business, not making money. I know all about it. I too have relatives." He seemed to consider his own past now, and suddenly broke out with: "I say! I never told you about the time I was in business. We had a very decent chief, and the proprietor one day sent a new man along to be—as we were told—colleague to our chief. It wasn't very long before we saw it was not colleague he was to be, but that he was there to pick up things, and after he had picked them up our old boss could be pushed out. Poor old Whipple! We all saw what was going on, even before

he did. He was like you, Moir, easily taken in by the surface palaver. This new man who came along was one of these big, breezy fellows—you know the breed—with a lot of the talking Socialist about him. It was 'Good morning, Comrade Whipple!' and 'Well, Comrade Whipple, how goes it to-day?' And comrade Whipple took it all in. But one day, when this big fellow, Forbes, came in with a story about the proprietor going to cut down wages and sack a few of the staff, Whipple suddenly tumbled to it, and handed in his resignation. I wouldn't have done that. I would have let them go the whole hog and give me the sack. Whipple, poor fellow, you see, had just a little touch of the respectable about him also, and he didn't relish the thought of being asked to resign. After he had gone, I heard Forbes saying to a man who asked after the old boy: 'Yes, Whipple and I were great friends! I'm sorry to lose him.' But to another I heard him remark: 'Ah yes. Whipple would like to get back, I expect.' I couldn't stand the atmosphere after that. Most of the fellows began hunting for other jobs; one or two got them before their indignation cooled. I couldn't see a job anywhere, but I resigned before my indignation *could* cool."

"Splendid!" said Martin, who had been drawn out of himself.

"I thought so myself," answered Wilson. "But my people didn't see it that way. It was a swagger sort of job. There was a beautiful brass nameplate outside the offices. They had had to get letters of reference —about me and me familee—from men in high, material places before they could put me into it. They had paid a big money premium; and I was a dam young fool. I got so much of that sort of thing that I left home and managed to pull along doing heads of judges and king's counsels, and murderers and so forth—for a sanguinary

weekly for the home. Oh I know *all* about it. And here I am now, in a nice studio with an oak chest for the coals—the coals paid for, but not the chest; good easel—paid for; beautiful inlaid mahogany cabinet—not paid for, but will be anon! Rent paid—in advance, of necessity; can't get the studio otherwise, therefore I ignore the stipulation that I may not sleep here. They really want too much! Rent in advance and not allowed to sleep here! Rubbish! Oh, I say! Excuse me talking so much about myself, but I feel so frightfully happy and hopeful this morning. Well, what are *you* going to do about it?"

"I think I'll follow your example," said Martin. "I have been thinking. You see, my fees are paid till the end of the session at the Art School. If I could get a job somewhere during the day I could go up to night classes."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" moaned Wilson. "Fees paid—get a job! You can't get away from it! What's the matter—seeing your fees are paid—with going into digs and continuing as a day student anyhow?"

"I have very little money saved," answered Martin. "It might be better to keep that till the end of the session. I might need it then."

"I see," said Wilson. "Artist though you are, you must still take anxious thought for the morrow. I suppose it would be quite useless to suggest to you," he added in a sighing fashion, "that your father would hardly miss a little forged cheque? These people are frightfully keen on appearances, you know. He would do nothing; you could have it. No! No! That would hardly do. It would put you in a false position; they wouldn't understand. They would only see their side, and consider that you were criminally minded, instead of devoted to art! It would be quite in vain to plead that

they taught you this thought for money! And also you are not a rebel against them only. You are not rebelling against them alone, but against their whole scheme of things. And however mean they are to you, you must not make them suffer for their beliefs—which are not their own hatching, but their breed's! You must not be the bad little boy both in your own eyes and in theirs. But you feel that the time has come for you to take up your bundle and go forth like Christian—to leave them for your own sake. Is that the notion?"

"That's very much it," said Martin, in a voice not free from emotion; for, preposterous though Wilson's speeches might sound to him, he felt that Wilson, beneath this fleering talk, understood the situation.

"Ha!" cried Wilson, suddenly afire as he looked at the early visitor. "I would like to make a drawing of you just now. I would call it Spinoza. Do you know Spinoza at all?"

"No," said Martin. "I once had a copy of Spinoza's *Polemica*. I don't know why, for I didn't know enough Latin to get the hang of it, but I used to carry it about in my side pocket."

"That's very interesting—very interesting," exclaimed Wilson. "That's the sort of thing that our old friend Barker would call 'side.' He has limitations—good man, but has limitations. Now, I'll tell you why you liked to carry about that Spinoza with you; and I'll tell you why you make me think of Spinoza just now. It's because he was the man who said: 'Whoso loveth God must not expect to be loved by Him in return.' It is a deep thought, and you are half-way towards it in the way you feel about your—er, present trouble. But I think you might be able to bear it more easily if you

considered that after all—well—she gives you what she thinks is love."

Martin's face showed a look of uncertainty, as though he thought, on the verge of action, that perchance he was about to act wrong. Wilson broke out hastily:

"No, no! You have not to aid her to crucify you because of that."

"Do you know, Wilson," said Martin, "there is something behind it. It's deeper than Philistinism."

"Oh? Well, of course, you have given me no indications. The disease of my relatives was a thing they called Christianity. But it negatived everything Christ ever said, so far as I could see from reading in The Book. I read the New Testament through once, to see if Christ was as cruel and suburban as they made out. It seemed to me that they were the Devil's. I merely surmised yours were the same. But never mind. Maybe neither you nor I are small enough to crawl inside their brains to find out what it is. Let us go and have breakfast. You may know how genuine I am, Moir, and how much I appreciate your position, when I tell you that if you had still been working for your dad and earning wages as a manufacturer, I'd have asked you to pay for the joint breakfast. For I have no money. But, as it is, it will go upon the slate in my name."

"Oh, I have some money," said Martin.

"It makes no difference. Come—let us go."

They descended to breakfast at "'a quiet place" that Wilson knew in Hope Street. Martin ate in meditative silence, and when the repast was over he said: "Do you mind coming down to the post-office with me?"

"Not at all." And thither they went, Wilson all eyes for the lights and shadows and colours of the streets, for arrangements of people abroad in them, keenly glimpsed

a moment, as in the turning of a kaleidoscope. Nor was Martin now so deep in his domestic troubles that the visible world failed to catch his observation. It pleased Wilson that once or twice some arrangement that caught his eye, or some pose, caught Martin's also, so that they looked from one to the other and nodded, as men with at least somewhat similar vision. Martin had a "wire," the wording of which he had considered over breakfast, to send off at Hope Street post-office.

"Well, I think that is all right," he said, coming out, and rejoining Wilson who had waited at the door. "I've just said: 'Don't worry—quite safe—writing later.'"

Wilson made no response, only looked thoughtful into middle distance. It struck him that Martin loosened the strands very slowly; but then of course he loved much. It seemed to Wilson that there was something almost of weakness in Martin's desire not to pain his natural persecutors overmuch. Still, it was not his affair—at least, not to the point of directing. Counsellor he might be, when asked; perhaps adviser; but not dictator; though he might have shown a puzzled frown had he known that it was to his mother, and not to his father, that Martin had addressed the telegram. They were again drawing near the corner of West Regent Street, Martin trying to gather together courage to say: "You have your work to do, Wilson. I will leave you and go to think out some plan of action," when a dapper little person, well groomed, with the buoyant step and radiant expression of one who walked into business in the morning (shoulders squared and deep breathing, for the sake of the exercise, and not, parsimonious, to save the car fare), saluted Wilson, and was saluted by him.

"Hope to see you later," said the little man, half turning as he passed.

"You can see me now," answered Wilson, and to Martin: "Just a minute."

The little man evidently prided himself on his sense of courtesy; he bowed briefly, in thanks to Martin for waiting, and, stopping, fell into talk with Wilson. They chatted together a little while, then saluted each other again with friendly dignity and parted. Wilson stepped after Martin, caught him by the elbow, and said: "Don't run away. You look as if you were weighing the advisability of steering off now, so as not to burden me. Don't be afraid at all of the future, of going on your beam ends, of having to touch your friends for assistance. Friends are the very last people you'd want to touch, of course. Oh, I know all about it! I always touched our friend the enemy. Come up to the studio. On entering a new life it is not a bad plan to sit down and meditate."

So they ascended again.

"Sit down," said Wilson, as he opened the door and stalked into the slightly dishevelled apartment. "I just want to get an inspiration from Auriol," and he ferreted in his cabinet till he found some pages torn from a magazine, and held them up at arm's length with admiration. They were indeed decorative pages. Martin, who had not sat down, but was wandering round looking at Wilson's work displayed against the walls, came over to share those pages, pages of monograms by George Auriol, monograms that were works of art. Beside each one was written the full name, the initials of which it gave. There were business monograms and private ones. The letters T and H of a Japanese name, Tadamasa Hayashi, had been adroitly represented as a torii. There was a seal made for Steinlen, already famous in studios far from Paris; one for Alphonse Daudet who, although a writing body, as Wilson commented, holding the page up, was "a good man, an artist too." The names and

monograms of Fabre, Forain, and Anatole France further decorated the page.

"They are always an inspiration," said Wilson, "and now that you have come to the crossways in your life, where you decide that Art (in the words of Leon the wandering minstrel) is not little water-colour sketches in the evening, you may as well be let into the secret that as well as trying to paint masterpieces I try to design masterpieces after the fashion of these. Monograms give me breakfast. I can tell you that. But these Philistines who ask of me to make my work mean something—to apply it, as they say—would be the very first to belittle me if they heard of my pot-boiling monograms: 'He's not doing very well—he has to do monogram designing, I hear, to eke out a living.' That's what they would say! The Philistines are very contradictory devils. O Lord! I'm getting bitter"—and he hummed a bar of his cheerful ditty. "That fellow I stopped and spoke to just now is manager in a jeweller's shop," he continued. "He is rather keen on my stuff. I give him the best I know, anyhow. I may boil the pot with them, and I may not have made monograms a life study—but I think my designs for him are not so dusty. I've got quite to like doing them."

Martin, looking at the Auriol designs while Wilson spoke, broke out, enthusiastic:

"You can imagine your monograms being used every day by jolly decent people anyhow—among those who can afford to have them to seal their letters."

Wilson smiled.

"Yes," he replied, "or happier still—by the people who really can't afford them, the people who should be saving up their money for rainy days, but who have these seals cut all the same, simply have to have them, seeing life's so short and there may be no seals hereafter,

simply must have them, and beseech the jeweller to have the monogram really beautiful.''

He sat down to work, and as he worked he still talked.

''Robarts was telling me just now,'' said he, leaving Martin to take it for granted that Robarts was the dapper manager encountered on Hope Street, he who commissioned the monograms, ''about his boss, and one of the porters. They are generally ex-soldiers. They sit down in the basement polishing silver, put out the blinds when the sun shines, take them in when it rains, and that sort of thing. Old man Chambers is in great anguish, it seems. He has warned one of the men half-a-dozen times about drinking, and he intends to stick to his word at last. He is a very likeable old fellow—tender-hearted, and imagines he is stern; frightfully keen on the observances of religion, and yet very forgiving and pitying over lapses in moral rectitude. He has a jolly fine stock of miniatures, they say. Robarts has asked me to go in some day and see the collection. But old miniatures bore me—except the frames, something like old prints and old bookplates. Why! I know a man who wanders round all the second-hand bookshops in town, putting his head in at the doors and saying: 'Any more bookplates?' He is a collector, you know. Atrocious things that he must get hold of! He's collecting bookplates—not works of art. He wouldn't look at a bookplate by Nicholson, or Simpson, or Craig, or Stone, or any of these fellows. Doesn't want anything modern. Doesn't want anything worth looking at—just old bookplates. Asked me to come and look over his collection once. I told him I was engaged every day for six months. It's quantity not quality with him. What an ambition—to have more bookplates than anybody else! He might just as well want to have more money than anybody else!'' So he went on, rambling and mumbling while he designed.

"How much do these silver polishers get?" asked Martin.

There was a brief glitter in Wilson's eye.

"I don't know," he said. "About thirty shillings a week, I suppose." He went on with his work, and there was silence for a space; then: "This is a snobbish kind of world or they'd be a different kind of men," he said. "I think I would rather make thirty bob a week polishing tea-pots and coffee-urns, than hump me up on the top of a tall stool in an office, beside a letter-copying press and a waste-paper basket—with nothing but files on the wall, adding up columns of figures all the week, so that the man I worked for might know how much he had, and that I might get drunk o' Saturday!"

"I suppose," said Martin, "men applying for such work in a jeweller's shop will need to show all kinds of letters vouching for their respectability?"

Wilson, who had been sitting bent over his table, now drew erect and smiled amiably.

"A young man," he remarked, "who gives a funny little doubtful frown on hearing that an artist has agreed with his landlord not to sleep in the studio and most deliberately does sleep there, from the first night of occupancy——

Martin, meeting his eye, broke out into laughter.

"Did I do that?" he asked. "I really didn't know. Look here, Wilson, could you put in a word for me at that jeweller's?"

"O Lord!" cried Wilson. "This is getting a little back on Ebenezer Moir, J. P."

"I hadn't looked at it that way," said Martin. "I don't want to get back on him. I'm fond of my old man. By Jove I am!"

"I know that," Wilson replied. "You are only following out the parental advice to look ahead for rainy

days. You must have a sure job, with a safe screw, to pay your way. But, my boy, you will get them a great deal more on the raw by leaving home and earning an honest living—oh, *honest* living, bless my soul!—than by running away to be an artist. The snobbish side of *you* will feel it, though, Moir. I expect you have a snobbish side."

"I believe I shall feel it," Martin admitted, "but I'm going to ask nobody for help, and I want to go on studying art, and I have very little money in the bank. I must get some kind of job."

"All right. I'll give you a letter—fancy me giving a letter of recommendation! Well, it must be past twelve o'clock, and seeing no cheque has come by the noon post I tell you what you might do."

"What's that?"

"Come down and pay for the breakfast we had on tick in my name, and let us have lunch—which will be put down to me."

"Oh, no, let me pay for both."

"No!" said Wilson definitely.

And about an hour later, sustained by lunch, they repaired to the shop of Chambers & Denny in Sauchiehall Street, for Wilson could not bring himself to write a letter of introduction and recommendation. The dapper little man was behind the class counter; a scowling man with a white-bibbed apron was up on a ladder arranging some urns on top of a case. "Just imagine having to keep all these twinkling and winking things in a high state of polish," said Wilson, chuckling. Robarts, beaming rosily, advanced upon them.

"I say, Mr. Robarts," said Wilson. "I've brought in a friend—Mr. Moir, Mr. Robarts."

"Pleased to meet you," chanted Robarts, and inclined his head. "You are the gentleman I saw this morning."

Martin, considering what he was here for, and knowing that on the social ladder there are many rungs, wondered, as he took the outstretched hand, what Mr. Robarts would think in a few minutes when Wilson should come to the marrow of the matter.

"He's a son of Ebenezer Moir—a well-known man——"

"Oh, yes!" Robarts nodded his head, puzzled.

"He wants to study art, and his folks won't let him. He has his fees paid at the School of Art, and he wants a job during the day—so as to get something to eat—that's the position roughly."

Robarts frowned, nodded. "I see," he said, and tucked his chin back into his collar and began to blink, blink, blink as he considered whether he knew of any post that was vacant and might be suitable. He prided himself on his aplomb. He made no exclamation over this bit of family tragedy sprung upon him. He was a man of the world. . . .

"He wants to get that job of silver polisher," said Wilson.

Robarts wilted.

"Oh! Oh, no, he couldn't! We—er—we couldn't offer it to him." He looked at Martin's attire, then at Martin's face; pursed his lips, shook his head. "Man, it would be *infra dig*!" he expostulated.

"Oh, nothing is *infra dig* so long as I can make a living," said Martin. "I have to say, of course, that if you gave me this job, just as soon as I could manage to live on my work——"

"Oh, yes, quite so—quite so. I should hope so. Man—wait a minute. Are you quite decided that you want this?"

"Quite."

"Tut! I wish I knew of something else I could put in your way, but I don't. Let me see—Mr. Chambers is

in. I'll speak to him——,'' and he departed. Very soon he returned to view at the far end of the shop and beckoned to Martin. ''I've spoken to Mr. Chambers. He'll see you. It's all right, I should think, if you're quite decided.''

''Quite decided. It's awfully good of——''

"Come along, then,'' and Robarts led Martin into the presence of an elderly man who studied him with twinkling brown eyes.

''My manager tells me you are introduced by Mr. Wilson. You are a friend of Mr. Wilson's?''

''Yes—we were at school together. I met him again recently.''

''Yes, yes, yes. Well—let me see. This is all very unusual. Still, I am not going to judge between you and your people. My manager has told me they object to you studying art, and you are determined to do so. You have left home?''

''Yes.''

''Well, I don't see why you should not polish silver as well as an old soldier, although it is not usual. They are very decent men, but they don't belong to your sphere,'' and he paused.

''They may be of a better sphere for all I know,'' said Martin, and gave a whimsical if slightly nervous laugh.

''Well!'' Mr. Chambers raised his head and studied Martin's face. ''I don't mind giving you an opportunity to decide that point at close quarters. You would learn silver polishing fairly easily I should think. It is a knack. But you would also have to deliver parcels to customers. Things are sent out at night, delivered by hand.'' He looked at his toes, thoughtful. ''You will get an apron—a white apron—and see that it is kept clean. A leather apron to work in when polishing will be given to you. Now about salary——'' Mr. Robarts backed away

a few steps, then turned and departed. "Would you expect as much as the usual men, or would you come for less, seeing that you are not accustomed to routine and so forth?"

"Well," said Martin, "I shouldn't like to feel myself an interloper. I know that silver polishers are not usually recruited from—er—I know that I may be considered —er—an outsider. But I shouldn't like them to think that I came in to cut down wages."

"Have you socialistic views?" fired off Mr. Chambers.

"I have never considered that," said Martin.

"I see. Well, so far as I can judge, the one man who may make it unpleasant for you is our Socialist!" (Wilson's story of the "comrade" flashed into Martin's mind; he felt a qualm about going further!) "No—I only asked to see how you looked at it. I can offer you just what I offer them—twenty-five shillings a week to begin with, and if all goes well it will be thirty shillings a week in six months. I don't suppose, with you, I need to go further and say anything about an increase after a year's service—for I have no doubt you will have seen the clouds roll away by then. And from what you said about not wanting to be an interloper and cut down, I take it that you are not the kind of young man to scamp your work, to look upon it only as a way to pay your board and lodgings while you study art in the evening. By the way—some nights, if you have to go far with parcels, you may have a rush to get to your classes. When do the evening classes begin?"

"Seven o'clock."

"Oh! Oh, you will manage as a rule, I think. Well, that's settled. Mr. Robarts will do the rest of the arranging."

"I am very, very much——"

"Don't mention it! Don't mention it!" and suddenly Mr. Chambers turned away.

Martin returned to the shop where Robarts and Wilson stood chatting over a drawer full of miniatures.

"All settled?" asked Robarts.

"Yes—all settled."

"That's good. When will you begin, then?"

"I've to arrange that with you."

"To-morrow morning?"

"Yes."

"All right! You be at the door at a quarter to nine—No—say nine. I'll be able to introduce you better then. The others gather outside at a quarter to nine and wait for me coming to open up and let them in and the night-watchman out. You come at nine for the first morning."

Thus, when they emerged again into Sauchiehall Street, Martin was "employed," and Wilson, having received payment for three monograms done the week before, knocked off work to sit in a smoke-room (a quiet smoke-room where footsteps fell muffled on deep carpet, and large shadows stretched from saddle-bag chairs, and curtains hung in rich, figured folds) and talk of art. There is nothing despicable in artists talking of art, surely—especially young artists, on the threshold of it all.

CHAPTER XIV

Martin rented a room in a little street off the New City Road, in the house of a maker of rupture-trusses and artificial limbs, whose wife—according to the idiom—took in lodgers. When one lodger gave notice a new one was attracted by the simple expedient of placing in the window a card upon which was printed the word: "Lodgings." This gave some annoyance to other inhabitants of the street, and caused Mrs. Davidson—the landlady in question—to be left very much alone by her neighbours; for it was considered better, much more "the thing," to advertise in *The Daily Press* instead of in the window.

Here Martin brought a new suit of "reach-me-downs," reached down for him in an Argyle Street shop, a change of underclothing, hair-brushes and tooth-brushes, and such necessities, in a second-hand bag. His landlady asked for no references, nor inquired as to his means of support; the latter would leak out in due course, the former were unnecessary. References, if produced, might be fraudulent; the payment or non-payment of his weekly bill would soon settle the question of tenancy or ejection. Rolls of a rough-surfaced paper, sheets of a smooth-surfaced cardboard, a small stone bottle containing a glossy black fluid called Ebony Stain, too thick for ordinary correspondence, and a sheaf of slender pens, too thin; these things suggested to the household that he was an art student, and they felt themselves in a position to refute all charges to the effect that art students kept irregular hours. He was easy to feed; fried eggs, poached

eggs, scrambled eggs, sausages, alternated without comment for breakfast—regular as the seasons. Lunch he ate out. At tea-time the eggs were boiled. On Sunday he ate dinner here—always two slices of roast beef, two roast potatoes, a quarter of a cabbage, or some spinach, and a plate of sago pudding. There was no other pudding in all the world but sago. His board and lodgings cost him about a pound a week; and he never had complaints to make. He was an estimable lodger. He made a drawing of the little daughter, one day, which they did not think nearly as good as an engraving after Fred Morgan, but which another lodger, years after, stole away and sold for twenty guineas.

A quarter to nine every morning found him at the door of Chambers & Denny's, saluting the other porters and the charwoman. At ten minutes to nine little Robarts, shoulders squared and deep breathing, strutted manfully down Sauchiehall Street, nodded to the men, raised a finger half-way to his hat to the charwoman, opened the tiny little door in the midst of the great iron shutter, and entered. The others followed and hastened to the tasks of the day. Martin's first duty was to insert a handle (like those used for screwing tables or tightening mattresses) into a hole in the wall and turn it vigorously. As he did so the shutters, of layers of iron, slowly moved upwards. Boys coming from the west to Alan Glen's school used to require a friendly caution from him that they would be late for school, so great were their curiosity and speculation regarding where the shutters rolled up to. While he was thus employed the other porters were polishing the brass name-plates that were then brought out and fitted along the bottoms of the windows, which, after the shutters were rolled up, looked naked till they came. Before this duty was finished the shop assistants began to arrive—safes were opened, safes fitted with

grooves left and right, supporting velvet-covered trays studded with jewels. These were laid away every evening from out of the showcases and the windows; every morning were carried back again for the day's display.

At about nine o'clock Martin's work on the street level was finished, and he went below, to find the night watchman chatting with the other porters before going home. He enjoyed the work immensely, or if not the work, the experience. It was such an utterly new world. The porters were interested in him, he in the porters. He soon understood and relished, in a kind of onlooking way, their sense of humour. As they worked at their polishing the head porter would suddenly break the silence with: "I remember when I was a young soldier . . ." and launch into some narrative, mounting up and up from the realms of fact into those of fancy.

"Man, I quite believe that," old Richards (one of the under-polishers) would say, when the effort in the vein of Munchausen was at last finished. "But did I understand ye to say ye was once a young soldier?" for the head porter, though a twenty-one years' service man, had spent most of his time as an officer's servant. White (the head porter) would retort: "I suppose you had quite some military experiences yourself away up yonder in the north-west frontier at what you call the place?—Maryhill, is it?" The Glasgow barracks were situated at Maryhill, north-westwards.

One evening, as Martin walked out of the shop with a monster green baize bag, full of parcels of brooches and jewels to be delivered at West End houses, Richards called after him: "Just a minute, Moir!" Martin turned back. Richards hastened to him and whispered: "I hope some of your damned aristocratic friends will see ye the nicht with the green bag!" It was Richards' way; just his joke. And it was a joke that Martin relished too—

for he liked Richards (that charming, roguish, grizzled, ex-Inniskillen Dragoon), and Richards (on his side) admired Martin; there was nothing vindictive in this jest, no exulting over class in it whatever. Indeed, coming from Richards, and being spoken as it was, with a brief, demoniacal leer, and a twinkle in the eyes, it seemed to mean something different from its sound—was so meant, I think; a kind of "Buck up! You are not accustomed to this kind of thing, but—well, here's to you anyhow!" Martin chuckled; but truth to tell—once in the street—he felt an ignominy in the baize bag before he had gone fifty yards. He was sensitive about it. Sometimes girls, passing him, arm in arm, would look at it, at him, at the bag again, nudge each other, and go off into shrieks of laughter. They had seen what Richards saw.

Martin did not object to being seen in shirt-sleeves putting out the sun-blinds (one of the rules of the shop was that porters must put out the sun-blinds in their white aprons and shirt-sleeves, not with jackets on); he did not object, even, when the whistle of the speaking tube blew, and he put his ear to it, to hear the muffled voice above say: "There's been a lady in with a dog. You might come up with a shovelful of sawdust and a washing-cloth." These things were all in the day's work. But the green baize bag, somehow—although it too, of course, was "in the day's work"—got him on the raw. Still, though he hated it, and hated himself for hating it—though he hated, going his rounds, to have to ring the bell marked "Tradesmen" instead of that marked "Visitors"—he forgot these things every evening at the School of Art.

The Chief did not seem to notice, for close on a week, that he was now studying only in the evenings. It was on the fourth, or perhaps the fifth night, that he touched Martin's shoulder with a finger-tip when standing be-

hind to examine his work, and said: "Might I suggest to you that the fact that you are going in chiefly for black-and-white need not make you absent yourself from the day classes?"

"I've had a row at home," Martin explained abruptly. "I've left home. I have to work during the day now for a living."

"No rich unc——" began the Chief, taking parental trouble for granted; "oh no—I remember. You are the young man who is independent when you can't afford to be, instead of being independent only when you can, like some loud talkers."

"It isn't independence at all then," agreed Martin smiling.

"No—quite so," said the Chief, "but many leeks are eaten."

"Oh, I'm eating a leek!" said Martin. "I carry round a green cloth bag, and deliver parcels at houses."

"Good God!" ejaculated the Big Man softly and feelingly. "You don't seem to be able to get away from cloth!"

Martin smiled.

"Last night," said he, "a footman asked me if I'd care to come in and have a bite of supper. And the night before I had to wait in a corner of a hall to see that something I delivered was all right; the man it was for came out into the hall and gave me a tip."

The Big Man had been standing listening with head bent; his gaze came up now, and under his brows he looked deep in Martin's eyes, then turned away without a word, looked at the work of one or two other men, as if with a mind divided between their drawings and what he had just heard. He came back to Martin again, treading slow and determined. Said he: "An artist will have his way;" and he turned away again.

On taking up his abode in the New City Road the first thing Martin had done was to write to his mother:

"DEAR MOTHER,—You will have received my telegram to tell you that I am all right, and now I write to tell you I have got a situation—*where* does not matter. It is quite impossible for me to bear your constant objection to my determination to follow art. It was bad enough to have you ignoring everything that I did, but when you go beyond the ignoring, and deliberately attack me, it is more than I can stand. I wish to apologise to you for what I said last night. Believe me it has given me great agony. I hope before long to prove to you that the career of art is the career that I should follow. Love to you both.

"Yours, MARTIN."

But a week had passed, and no reply came to Martin from either Mr. or Mrs. Moir. Every evening when he came home he asked anxiously: "Any letters for me, Mrs. Davidson?" The reply was always: "No, no letters." He went up to see Wilson on the first Sunday and they talked humorously of life in the jeweller's shop.

"Heard from your people?" asked Wilson.

"No. I wrote to my mother as soon as I got digs, as nice a letter as possible, just to let her know I was all right, and saying again that I was sorry for having turned round on her before I left. But she has not replied."

Wilson said nothing for a space, merely sat and stared at a tin of turps. Then: "Written to your father?" he inquired.

"I meant the letter for them both."

"You *are* a damn funny man," said Wilson. "You prolong the process."

"I see what you mean," Martin answered, "but I don't want to hurt her. I lie awake at night thinking it over. I suppose sooner or later I will have to harden my heart and dispense with that sense of not having delib-

erately pained her that seems essential to me." Wilson put his head back and thought this over with eyes half closed. "I am beginning to wonder if this is one of the laws of life—the deep, primal laws that I will have to acknowledge. I'm beginning to wonder if, sooner or later, I will have to rend her as she rends me, instead of just dodging her. It sounds awful to speak that way, and I should feel as if I had lost something in myself if I had to do it, something I could never replace."

Wilson nodded.

"I expect she's rending you now by not answering," he remarked.

Martin came to his feet.

"Let us talk about something else," he said. 'Good life—I am a self-centred beast."

Every day of his people's silence made him more moody; but he dissembled that moodiness. To the men in Chambers & Denny's he was a cheerful enough person, and he found them sociable—sociable as art students!—with two exceptions, the one an ex-Hussar (who died before long, so perhaps his grumpiness during the brief while that Martin knew him was only due to Death fumbling round him already and making him unsociable, willy-nilly), the other a Socialist, the man of whom Mr. Chambers had spoken as likely to be unpleasant. It was he who made the green baize bag weighty and ignominious beyond endurance; it was he who hastened the end. He had been elevated from the position of porter and polisher in the basement to a nameless billet on the shop floor. The porters were uncertain how to consider his job, whether as a sinecure or as a worry. He required to have deft fingers so as to make up neatly the little boxes (containing rings or bangles, silver match-boxes or this or that bric-à-brac) that were dispatched by registered post. He dusted the old china vases with a feather

duster; he kept fresh the frames and glass of rare miniatures with chamois leather; went out to houses of customers who wanted a man to pack fragile goods for them; was applied to (as guardian of store) by the porters when they required new leathers, or more packets of rouge. This man spent his spare time in the Mitchell Library, consulting books upon miniatures, old clocks, old silver, his aim being to become what perhaps no man is—invaluable. His aim was to corner his job, confiscate it. He wanted to know more about miniatures than Mr. Chambers. Already he was esteemed a useful man by his employers, though his growing abruptness of manner was noticed by them. They thought he was a pushing man, and if they could not bring themselves to like him greatly they considered that—after all—they could not employ only men that charmed them. The porters, even more than his employers, marked his increasing brusquerie. They resented his air of importance when they had to ask him to unlock the stores. They resented his air of being more like a God of the Chamois Leathers than a hired custodian of them. He gloated over Martin, and hailed his arrival every morning with a virulent smile. He had been wont to read a notoriously unjust and vituperative Socialistic weekly for his opinions; and, after Martin's arrival, he "took in" a celebrated pseudo-literary weekly chiefly made up of clippings from books recently published and of bombastic (or amusing, or pathetic, according to the eye of the beholder) self-advertisements of its editors—from the leading article to the correspondence column. This journal he now licked a thumb over so that he might be able (thanks to its clippings) to remark to Martin: "I was reading the other day in a book recently published. Perhaps you'll ha' read it, Moir, seein' ye hae pretensions to scholarliness."

"I'm sorry if I give you that impression," Martin said.

"Oh, ye canna help giving the impression. Your speech, like that of Peter, betrayeth thee. Aha, ma lad, we're all Jock Hamson's bairns here!"

If Martin had only known it, this sort of thing won him deeper friendship from his fellow-workers. When Richards said to him, as he went out with the baize bag, "I hope some o' your aristocratic friends will see ye," he had relished the joke. This man's snarlings he did not relish. He cheered himself by reflecting that others had suffered under such persons, for certain days. He recalled the story that Wilson had told of his office days, of the interloper who called all men "comrade" and cunningly stole the billet of one of these "comrades." Wilson would understand how this man was like poison to him.

One of the Socialist's duties was to arrange the parcels for delivery by hand; and always, if there was anything bulky (such as a soup-tureen, or a sports prize) he gave it to Martin to deliver. Three nights in succession Martin sallied forth carrying a small green bag full of knick-knack parcels, and two large and heavy ones, full, uncouth. He had come here determined to make the best of all the discomforts that might befall him; also it was in his nature to win by acquiescence, and although Comrade Spears (to give him his name) longed to hear him complain, he would not. But if his mother had heard the language that he muttered to himself, tramping through crescents and terraces of Dowanhill, Kelvinside West, and Hyndland, she would indeed have thought that he was learning a sad vocabulary from his companions. As a matter of fact his companions were not responsible for that vocabulary. His vocabulary on these tedious itineraries would doubtless have amazed them, had they

heard it. Often the delays and distances of these "delivery rounds" made him arrive late at the Art School; and a sense of anger against Comrade Spears for his ceaseless injustices burned in his heart. He became almost a monomaniac. "They are all against the artist, all against the artist," he would mutter to himself, fumbling about in twilit West End crescents, roads, streets, seeking short cuts from Patrick to Hyndland, from Hyndland to Kelvinside—sometimes only to run into a bag's end of a road and have to turn back; though it has to be told that his anger in these journeys (time-wasting in so far as the Art School classes went) never blinded his eyes to the pictorial. Many an arrangement of park trees and railings and paths; many an arrangement of curving crescent, void pavement marked with spacious line of kerb, blob of gold (of lamps) set here and there fittingly; many a scene (from one side) of quiet gable with tree before it and tree-shadow silhouetted upon it, and (from the other side) of globe of gold meshed in green foliage, was tucked away (with an uplifting of the heart and a kind of subconscious "Thank God!"), put away in his mind, as the shelves of jewels were slipped into the safes at night.

It was Richards who protested on his behalf.

"Look here, Spears, you're goin' ower far," he said one night.

"What do you mean? Are you not satisfied?" asked Spears.

"No, I'm not."

"I think *you* get a very easy time," said Spears from behind the dispatching counter.

"Oh, it's not maself I'm thinkin' aboot. I'm no Socialist! You've given Moir here the heaviest end of the stick for nights, aye—weeks!"

"Rubbish!" said Spears. "Look at what he's got this

evening. Just one wee bagful—and you've yon big urn."

"Rubbish yourself!" said Richards. "You give him the big urns when they're to go to out-of-the-way places. This big urn I have won't delay me; I'll take the car from here to the very door. Ah'll be sittin' in ma shirt-sleeves in the hoose before he's got richtly begun tae his lang roounds. He's to go half over the west of Glasgow with that little bag. He won't be finished till all hours."

"Aye, aye! Fair do, fair do!" the others protested.

"Is it my job to arrange these things, or is it yours?" Spears asked; but Robarts, hearing rising sounds of altercation, subdued still though they were, in deference to the elegance of the shop, came hurrying to the dispatching-table.

"Just you go on with your other work, Spears," he ordered. "I'll arrange these."

Martin could not find words to thank Richards; but he knew that the old man would be disconcerted by thanks. His heart was full of affection for his fellows of the basement as he departed that night upon a fair and rational "round." When next Sunday he went to see Wilson he could get no response to his ring. After he had rung several times the door of the adjoining studio opened, and a man looked out.

"Mr. Wilson has gone to Arran for a month," he said.

"A month," said Martin, only reserving the note of exclamation by an effort. "Thank you very much; thank you very much," and he descended the stairs, trusting that he had, stoically, not shown disappointment. But Wilson's next-door neighbour, closing his door, considered: "No, I don't believe that *was* a dun after all!"

Martin had, of course, many houses open to him in Glasgow; but they were of his people's friends, and not of his own. He had, indeed, with a wild sense of splendid vagabondage, delivered a parcel down the area steps of a

house where he had frequently visited with his father and mother. Imaginative capacity, or a touch of make-believe, stood him in good stead on that occasion, and brought him to the street level again with a certain titillation, picturing himself to himself as a kind of François Villon.

But he did not feel thus elated in his vagabondage now, as he came on to deserted West Regent Street, disappointed in his hope of seeing Wilson. Why didn't his mother write? Why didn't his father write? Dusk was falling. The Sunday dusk. Here in the city the side streets were all empty. And a fancy took him to run out to Langside and look at the windows of home! He stood uncertain, looking up West Regent Street into the last crumbling red sunset that was veined and lined like an ancient, cracking oil-painting. And as he looked there came the pit-pat of feet, a faint odour of a scent, an odour of a kind that suggested a paste rather than a liquid, and a sinuous girl passed him, turned back and smiled. She was one of the models at the school—the doubtful one, the one who looked pained over her profession, who, wearing that expression, did not win Alexander's pity. Martin had never heard her speak.

"Mr. Moir, isn't it?" she said, in a very musical voice.

"Yes, Miss Page," he answered.

"You look as if you had lost something," she said.

"I've just been up to see a friend here and I find he's away for a month."

"They all seem to be away," said she. "I was up at a friend's just now too, and found the door shut and everything dark. I get the hump on Sundays. I get such a hump that I can't be bothered eating, and I've got an appetite like a cavity. If somebody would only remember that though it's Sunday you can get a supper at Farina's——"

The vision of the creamy front of Farina's, and the radiance within, made Martin jump at the suggestion. Humbugging would have been to flatter himself that he invited Maud Irene Page to supper because she was lonely; it was Martin Moir's misery he sought to assuage when he said: "Why, let us go, then,"—his misery over many things: over a mother's silence and a father's estrangement, over his own regret for having sworn at his mother, over his friend's departure, over the prodigal's husks—the world of green-baize bags.

"Come along," said she; and ten minutes later they had given their order and were wondering whether the waiter was French or Italian.

Recollections of Mürger's *Vie de Bohème* began to be in the back of Martin's mind as he sat at table. While he talked, or listened, a thread of thought quite different from that in their chatter was running on in his brain. From Murger he passed to considering Gallic views of morality, of the habits of mistresses. There were exchanges of many tender glances between them, glances that seemed to have little or nothing to do with the words spoken. It was as if Miss Page was smiling engagingly through his eyes (as through windows) at some dancing inhabitant she saw there, one made in the image of Pan—or so it seemed to Martin, amazed at himself, and indeed somewhat enjoying his new self. To be a skipping Pan was pleasant after having been a brooding and lonely outcast in a Sabbath city, with his one real friend gone to Arran for a month. He would cut himself off not only from his kindred, but from all respectable persons—beer would he drink, nay brandy, nay! Absinthe; and his sanctuary would be a bawdy-house! Who were they, who, hating art, persecuted him? On their heads be the sin, if sin there was. He would go to the Devil! They made the world a hell for him: very well, he would revel

in hell! They wouldn't care, they had shown they didn't care. Somebody came in, and sitting down at the piano, opened it, and broke out in the first bars of some languorous melody, causing a waiter to come running in precipitate anxiety, calling out that it was Sunday. A stout lady (who looked as if she had hurried out of a Steinlen drawing) followed the waiter, demanding the piano key, which was eventually brought to her from somewhere, and she locked the instrument.

"It gives me the hump," said Miss Page. "The way they try to make things gloomy is enough to make one take to drink. There's no place to go, there's nothing to do except—— I don't know, it gives me the pip! Nothing to do but go home and sit by the fire in the easy-chair."

First Martin's heart jumped, and the next moment he was fondly considering the last words, with their Darby and Joan suggestion, and conceiving of himself as spending the evening with Miss Page in her own boudoir, wherever it might be. Much as our popular novelists provide their readers with neurotic thrills in phrases as of the moralist, did Miss Page handle this cosy subject. As a matter of fact, she liked it. She had met many worse men. She would call him "a decent sort."

"Oh, well, never heed!" she broke out, evidently considering her last remark. "It's better than the factory."

"Factory?" he was brought out of himself to ask.

"Yes," she answered. "I used to work in a factory," and she unfolded some little fragments of her life. He listened with great interest. He did not care to ply her with questions—preferring that she tell just as much as she wished. He was interested, not curious. The fragments made him see her anew, and he liked her very well. She was aware of his liking, and was pleased, for she

was lonely if wild. Martin had a touch of pity for her, and could have sat longer—while it developed into sympathy—but the waiter was fussing, so they came out again into the street.

"Well, what now?" she inquired. "What a cold wind!"

An occasional cab lumbered past; the cars clattered through Sunday streets, lit with dim lamps; all the shops were closed, all save a restaurant or two and the occasional ice-cream shops—that to-night did more trade surely, in their alternative of hot peas and vinegar. The laughing parade of exuberant youth went to and fro on Sauchiehall Street. Under a lamp held aloft on a pole (a lamp like a square Chinese lantern, that illuminated the words "God is Love" painted upon its sides) from the centre of a crowd came a voice, a voice that screamed upwards towards hysteria: "My friends—I stand at this corner—to-night—saying to you—now—now—now—is the appointed time—now—is the day—of Salvation—my friends—I say to you——"

"Oh, he gives me the blue devils!" said Miss Page. It was an exciting voice.

As they turned away Martin noticed two little children at the corner of Cambridge Street, timidly regarding the traffic. One, a small enough youngster herself, was playing the part of guardian for the other, the even more diminutive one. Miss Page cried "Oh, look at these kiddies, poor little things!" Martin stepped to them.

"Give me your hand, my dear," he said to the elder, "and I'll take you across."

She looked up, startled at his voice, then gave him her hand, clutching his with confidence.

"No—not yet. Now!" he said, and led them across.

She looked up and smiled.

"Thank you so much," she said, and bowed a quaint

little bow which the one of a size smaller imitated. Martin bowed deeply—and solemnly—in response; she was so much like a little puppet queen, come alive and confiding in a Pannic world of which she knew nothing! Then he returned to the pavement on which he had left Miss Page, hardly aware of a watching policeman's half nod of appreciation towards him. And behold, Mürger's *Vie de Bohème,* and what he had heard or read of the morals of other latitudes, were all blown away. Miss Page looked in his face.

"Well?" he said, coming to the pavement.

"Well?" said she.

He held out his hand.

"Thanks for the supper," she said.

"Thank *you,*" he answered. "I didn't know what to do with myself."

It was a warm handshake. He raised his hat and turned away.

"Go straight home," she called, over her shoulder.

"Yes," said he. "You too."

"Yes, it's too cold to stay out," she replied. "So-long."

The elder child's face haunted him. He walked on feeling almost as if he had been at worship as well as these people arrayed in their Sunday best who were being trundled along through the dark streets inside the dim-lit tramcars, homing from church and chapel.

CHAPTER XV

A FAMILIAR voice outside his door gave Martin pause next morning in the midst of breakfast. He leapt to his feet, thrusting back his chair. Mr. Moir—ushered in by the landlady, who closed the door after him—ignored the outheld hand of his son, and refused to be moved by his look of welcome. He advanced into the room with that resolute, thewy stride that in their younger days the boys had known as sign of determination.

"Look here," he said, head up, dispensing with any salutation, "when you ran away from home, and we received your wire, I considered the matter. I thought to myself: 'Good! It may make him—it may make a man of him!' I was very much on your side, though you may not have imagined it. I may say that I have been hurt that you did not write to me; still, a father can't demand that his son be filial. He can grin and bear it if he isn't. I have left you alone because I thought it might be for your good. I discovered where you were working. I was told by a friend. Well—I cannot say I enjoyed it very much; still, it showed pluck. I left you alone. I thought if you wanted me—really urgently—you would let me know. I did not look for you to consider my side. You've evidently not cared a penny-piece whether your mother, your brother, or I were alive or dead. I hear you have still been at the School of Art. It is a side-issue, but I would like to point out to you that while you have not thought of the possibility that your father might be interested in you, you had your fees paid for you there by him, and a sense of honour—apart

from any family feeling—should have made you at least give him an inkling of how you were progressing."

"I wrote——" Martin began.

"Silence!" said Mr. Moir.

"If I had known you would throw——" began Martin afresh.

"Silence!" Mr. Moir repeated. "If it were not for possible misunderstandings I would write to the School and have your classes stopped so far as I am concerned."

"Then do so!" cried Martin.

"Oh, I'm not going to do *that*," answered his father.

"If it were not for disgracing you," said Martin, "I would tell the janitor, or whoever has charge of such things, to refund to you and pay myself for——"

"Be careful," said Mr. Moir. "I have come here to tell you that you were seen last night. And I am not going to have it. I hoped you were going to make a man of yourself. You were seen with a woman of the streets."

"She was not a woman of the streets!" cried Martin.

"You deny it?"

"She was an artist's model."

"A model! And you told me that models——"

"Who told you this lie?" said Martin.

"Your mother saw you. And you have cut *her* to the quick. Trust a woman's instinct! She knew the way you were going!"

"Very good," said Martin quietly. "I shall go farther. Why did she not write to me?"

"Did you write to her?"

"I did."

"You did *not*. You sent a telegram—a telegram!

"And wrote the same night," said Martin.

"I don't believe you."

Martin became suddenly very calm.

"It's a funny thing," he said, "funny thing," using, without knowing it, a favourite phrase of his father's; "funny thing," he said again, in a dry voice. "I would go on and on bearing from her—tolerating, making allowances. But if you've said all you've got to say—you'd better go."

"Well, can you give any explanations? asked his father, looking directly at him for the first time.

Martin flared again.

"To you? No! To nobody! Can you explain to me why my mother did not stop——"

"She was in a cab, coming down from church."

"She was a long way from home, was she not?"

"She had been out at Dr. Hunter's church."

"Oh, I see," said Martin. "I heard my landlady talking about him the other day. I believe they're writing to the papers about him too. My landlady went to hear him because she had been told that he didn't preach what she calls 'the Gospel.' Has mother taken up the craze? It seems less worthy than her old fad of down with the opium traffic. There was some decency in that."

"My boy," said his father, "you'll be sorry for this. I shall go before I hit you."

Martin stepped to the door to open it, but his father raised one hand as if to smite, and opened the door for himself, passed out, strode across to the outer door which he opened, and Martin waited for the expected reverberating slam. But it did not come. The "expression" of the back of the figure in Watts' picture "For he had Great Possessions"—which gave a subject for artistic talk in so many quarters, in pulpits and parlours, and at high-tea tables—was trivial compared with the expression of Mr. Moir's back as, at the door, he paused; a brief and tremendous pause. Then he went out, closing the door gently after him.

That view did for Martin what all the rest had not done. That back subdued him, broke him almost. After a few minutes he prepared for business and set forth—an hour late. He did not want to go to work—work could go hang. All the recognised affairs of life seemed to have nothing to do with life. How his father could come up to his room and pass through such an experience as that just over, and then go into the office in Glassford Street, and attend to the day's work, was beyond Martin. He could not comprehend it. It was never intended that man should do it. It was a different matter with Mrs. Moir. She could concentrate all day on how to persecute an artist. She could concentrate all day on bitter hatred of her son's ways. She seemed to know always what to do to upset the real life that others led. When he had craved for her sympathy with his work, she gave him a cold face of lack of interest. When he showed that he could get along without her goodwill or appreciation, she came into his life to disrupt him again. She was a persecutor! Well—he would let affairs slide. To go into that Sauchiehall Street shop, descend to the basement, don linen apron and on top of that leather apron, and polish soup-tureens, silver ladles, and so forth, in his present ferment was impossible. She had driven him to this work, but she should not make him do it in anguish. He would look for another kind of freedom. He would demand—he would take—out of all the days, one day for being alone, like a sick cat—or, if possible, like a withdrawn seer, meditating upon Eternity. The world was too much with him already. He would see if—and just then he met Maud Page, out looking for somebody to provide her with a lunch.

She wondered if perhaps he regretted his retreat of last night, for he seemed delighted to see her. Yes, he thought, it was true that her appearance was suggestive

at least of a-morality (if not im-morality); but she looked to him more of a haphazard person than a depraved person—as in his father's phrase. And she had a very friendly smile for him! His mother was to blame, if blame was due to him.

"Going to lunch?" he asked.

"Isn't it too early?"

"Not for me. I'm ravenous."

"I don't mind," and she swept gracefully to the inside of the pavement as he passed to the outside, he catching her elbow in the motion. Work "went hang!" But it did not occur to him that here was not the sage going off to commune, to loaf and invite his soul. He had a thrill like that which, in certain moods, comes out of the *Rubáiyát*—that side of Omar which doubtless made Cowell regret a little that he had advised FitzGerald of its existence, and caused him to say that he was troubled a little over the result of the introduction, acknowledging that he turned rather to Nazareth than to Naishapur in moments of need. Mrs. Moir had always been doubtful of the Persian tent-maker. Had she been able, at this moment, to see inside her son's head, she would have had her "I told you so!" For a couplet of the poem was in his mind now.

Miss Page suggested some place for lunch, and asked him if he knew it, hardly expecting that he would. He did not. It was "a decent place," she said, and not too "stiff" for an artist's purse. She still thought he was entirely an art student, and he did not find it incumbent on him to disabuse her mind of that error. It was good to have someone beyond himself sharing the illusion, helping him to dismiss the green baize bag. So art student he was all through lunch. When it was over, and lunch and wine paid for, he felt a great desire to pillow his head upon Miss Page's kindly bosom and weep, or,

perchance, sing. Then another thought came to him. He must make explanation of absence at the shop. It was only polite to do so—only polite. The words kept reiterating in his ears. Miss Page was full of smiling admiration of his courtesy under the influence of the second bottle of wine. He had hesitated a moment after ordering it, and it was a hesitation (she believed) that she understood—the hesitation of one who would fain riotously scatter the doubloons all the way but had no great banking account. That look had passed quickly, and she had laughed and said: "Never mind! Be happy while you are alive. You never know." It delighted him to have his thoughts read so well. He was beginning to pass into that mood, the abandoned mood, though really his hesitancy had been due to a warning, quaintly delivered by himself to himself, that another bottle might have disastrous effect. But if she could stand it without, as the saying is, turning a hair, why not he?

With intense politeness he asked her now if she would wait for him while he ran down the street to see a friend. The permission granted he went forth, and was astonished at his added sense of confidence in the streets. He felt more important, if a trifle low in tone. There were no customers in the shop when he entered; the proprietors were at lunch, and Mr. Robarts was in sole charge, standing behind the counter, admiring a drawer full of miniatures, two or three layers of them, each reposing on cotton wool.

"Hullo, Moir!" he said. "You're late, man! Been anything wrong with you?"

"I have had a little domestic trouble this morning," said Martin.

Now domestic troubles were common among the porters. Upon every occasion that Mr. Orr, the unco-guid

cashier, fussed away in search of Mr. Chambers to say to him: "Oh, Mestir Chambers, there's that porrter Richards smellin' o' liquor again," and Mr. Chambers interviewed the culprit, the explanations were excellent. Grandmother had died, and So-and-so, "that's me wife's brother's auldest like, sir, was merrit yesterday, and would you believe me, sir, they wull hae liquor on such occasions! And I tell ye, sir, it doesna agree wi' me. But it would be inhospitable of me to refuse, sir." Robarts was slightly amused, however, to hear of domestic troubles from this young man. Wilson had told him all that was necessary regarding the mystery of Martin Moir; and his sense of courtesy, which, though it was very much on parade, was a genuine impulse in his life, prevented him asking for any more information than was offered. But a certain glamour now in Martin's eye made him inclined to smile. Robarts's evident amusement brought forth from Martin:

"It is quite true, Mr. Robarts, I assure you. I have this morning had a most painful interview with a man—" his voice passed from speech into intoning, grandiloquent, and yet, thought Robarts, there were certain depths in this—" a most terrible interview, Mr. Robarts, with a man I most deeply admire—a stirling—I mean a sterling man, straightforward man, a most ex-ex-exemplarary man—very near of kin to me. Ah, Mr. Robarts, would that some winged angel ere too late arrest the yet unfolded roll of Fate and make the stern Recorder otherwise enregister or quite obliterate."

Mr. Robarts considered him gravely, but with a twinkle in the midst of his gravity.

"I think you had better get away home, Moir," he said. "I was afraid, you know, that you would not be able to continue your resolve to work here. I assure you I couldn't have done it, not even to pursue art."

"Mister Robarts, I would die for art!"

"Oh yes, yes, quite so. But let us hope there will be no need for that," answered Robarts encouragingly. "You've been very greatly to be admired. Some nights when I have seen you going out carrying that green bag——"

"Green bag?" said Martin. "Do you know, that's a most extraordinary thing? There are some people can't see green. Did I say sea-green? Grass green! Any kind of green! But can you tell me what they *do* see? It isn't just a nothing, an aching void."

"No, no; of course not."

"Mr. Robarts, you are a man who understands. Do you know, there are people who won't believe these things? It has severed families; and, as I said just now, hopes have been shattered and heroes slain in the ranks of the losing side."

"I think ye'd better go home," said Robarts. "I'll come up and see you to-night if you promise to go home now."

"You will?"

"I will!"

"When will you come?"

"After the shop shuts. Now, you'll oblige me by going home and just having a sleep till I come."

"Yes, very well. Do you think Mr. Chambers would like to come?"

"Well—er—he's out just now. I've got a great deal to do. I'll come up and see you to-night."

"Well, I won't detain you just now," said Martin, and forth he sailed into the street. At the corner he stopped suddenly in amazement, for there was Wilson, supposed to be in Arran, looking rather peculiar. Wilson raised a hand, forefinger elevated, and waggled that reproaching forefinger in Martin's eye.

"You had better come up with me and explain it all before I blame you," he said.

"Good man," said Martin, "good man. That's what I've been wanting for a long time—to explain. But I haven't got the explanation myself. Oh, half a minute! There's somebody waiting for me in a restaurant. I promised to go back. What can I do?"

"What do you want to do?"

"Look here," said Martin suddenly. "I thought you were in Arran!"

Wilson laughed briefly.

"Oh, it was you, was it? I expected a man up to dun me recently, and I told my neighbour to tell him I had gone to the Aran Islands. Arran is in the Clyde; the Aran Islands are really somewhere in the same *mer-incognito* as Ultima Thule and the Lost Atlantis and the Fortunate Isles, and all these places are. He's been telling that to everybody when I'm not about."

"I know," said Martin, "in the Sargasso Sea"; and then: "I say, I'm amazingly sleepy!"

"I think you'd better leave that appointment, then, for Time to heal," said Wilson. "Has the lady in question seen you this morning?" O worldly-wise Wilson!

How did he know? Or did he only guess?

"Yes, I had lunch with her—Miss Page—you know."

"What! Miss Page the model!" cried Wilson. "Good God, man, she's the kind of woman who says she's thirty!"

"Well, I promised to go back. She's waiting for me."

"She won't wait."

"I must go back, or she'll think I'm a cad."

"Do you want to go?"

"No, I don't. I want to stay with my own thoughts. It seems strange too," he added, "but I don't know—

I'm afraid I couldn't find my way back to the restaurant. Something seems to have happened to the street!''

''Very well, then, be a cad. Come with me. To me the street is quite normal.''

Martin looked puzzled. Wilson took him by the elbow, and evading the traffic they came to the other side, and walked down to West Regent Street. It was through a droll world that they strolled to the studio, Wilson piloting now and then, a world in which everybody walked in duplicate, so that Martin thought he had gained a new vision, by which, as he tried to explain to Wilson, he could see the Jekyll and Hyde in every man.

''Jekyll and Hyde!'' said Wilson. ''Well, I don't see why people should arrange things so as to bring the Hyde out. I am not a puritan, but I prefer you as Jekyll. And Hyde is apt to drag Jekyll down. The whole point of that fable is that a man is not two people—but one. I was reading the other day in a French poet about 'escapes from life'; but I don't see why one should be forced to want an escape. You may be a subject for the amusement, or a subject for the censure, of those who have made you like this, but to me you are damned pathetic. Yes, you are a dam pathetic object, Martin Moir. A man should drink wine only when he wants to drink wine, not because he doesn't want to. Now—'' for they had come to the studio—''just you tuck yourself up in my little cot and slumber like a peaceful child.''

Martin lay back on the bed and allowed himself to be tucked up by three Wilsons. There must be some other explanation for it—it wasn't Jekyll and Hyde.

''Wilson,'' he said, laughing foolishly, ''you are a triptych,'' and closed his eyes.

The next he knew there was a sound as of lapping waves. Then he felt a gentle rocking. No, it was only his pulses. But there was somebody singing. He came

slowly awake. Over in the corner Wilson was washing at his basin, and humming, pianissimo. Martin came broad awake at the last line—"And now I am happy all the day, all the day." He sat up, looking ashamed.

"Hullo! Better?"

"Yes, thank you. I say—I had too much to drink!"

"Too much misery, I expect. Did old Chambers see you?"

"No—just Robarts."

"Oh, well, that's all right for you. Is the work there getting on your nerves?"

"A little."

"Chuck it, then, chuck it."

Martin laughed ruefully.

"It was a determination to chuck it," he said, "that ended in this fiasco, and a wasted day—a wasted day," he repeated, looking up at the skylight. "The light's gone."

"Yes," said Wilson. "I'll have to hurry," and over to the wall he dragged his table, put a chair on top of it, hurriedly abstracted from its drawer several yards of tubing. Then he mounted table, mounted chair, and with head near the ceiling began to pant and puff. Presently: "That's it!" he wheezed, climbed down again, struck a match, and lo! from the corner of his ceiling to his gas bracket was a stretching snake of tubing with a large burner at the end.

"What's this for?" asked Martin.

"Isn't it obvious?" said Wilson. "They came and cut off my gas at the meter, and I've had to tap the main."

"Good life, man! You'll get *run in* for that."

"Oh, we must have a light," said Wilson.

And by the aid of the light Martin washed, freshening himself, but overcome by a sense of having thrown away hours of his life, as never had he felt on awakening from normal sleep.

"You are a decent sort, Wilson," said he.

"Oh, rot!" said Wilson.

Suddenly there came to his mind, vaguely, a belief that Robarts had promised to come and see him that night.

CHAPTER XVI

"Mr. Robarts has arrived before me," thought Martin when he turned from New City Road into the tributary street where his lodging was situated, and saw that the window was brilliantly lit. Framing an apology, he put his key in the lock, and said he: "If Robarts is waiting for me in dread of what I may be like, he will be agreeably surprised." He opened the door of his own room, and there beheld—causing his face to show astonishment—on one side of the fire, his father; upon the other the expected visitor. What was his father doing here? What had he come back for? Clearly he was not in his mood of the morning. He had the look of a large and important man at ease; Robarts seemed slightly deferential, yet upright, as though in the frame of mind of the centurion who said: "I understand, for I also am a man set in authority, and I say unto one Go and he goeth, and to another Come and he cometh." Yes, Mr. Moir looked a big man, not only in physique—as he sat back in the armchair, legs crossed in large ease, head up, talking with interest to Robarts, although much aware of an undercurrent of eagerness for his son's arrival. Robarts, on his side, was aware of an undercurrent of perturbation as to how Martin Moir might appear; and when Martin entered, groomed, and in his right mind again, great was his relief.

Mr. Moir rose, towering and slack.

"Well, Martin?" he said. Their glances met, and as they looked at each other hand grasped hand.

"Here you are, Mr. Robarts," said Martin. "I see you two have introduced yourselves."

"We've managed that," replied Robarts, perky and beaming, his cheeks rosy. He and Mr. Moir had been chatting upon various themes: the state of trade, the relative effects upon trade of a Conservative or Liberal Government; the effects of competition; which had led them on to discuss good and bad workmanship, and had called forth a little personal comment from Robarts which had the effect of making Mr. Moir take a deeper and more interested survey of him, and brought a whimsical and slightly paternal smile to his face. "For my own part," Robarts had said, "even a gold stud, if I am wearing a gold stud, and it happens to be hidden by a high weskit, such as I have on at present," he tapped his chest, "oh no, I haven't! Well, no matter—it is the same thing—it is hidden by my tie. If I happen to be wearing, as I say, a gold stud, even supposing it to be hidden, it must be of the best carat gold. Do you know, Mr. Moir, I wouldn't be happy all day if I had the private consciousness that that stud was poor grade." It was this *confession intime,* dropped into a conversation on good and bad workmanship, and on supply and demand, that had suddenly warmed the heart of the manufacturer—who strove in Glassford Street to live up to such ideals.

"Have you been waiting long?" Martin looked from one to the other.

"Not very long," answered Robarts.

"Do sit down."

"I'll not sit down again," said Robarts. "No, no, I'll not sit down again. I just looked in, you know, in passing. It came into my head—er—perhaps to ask you—um—if you'd like to come out—er—to my place this evening. You've never met my wife—just a quiet homely evening, you know. But your father having arrived I'll run away."

"Oh, you must stay a little while," Martin persisted.

"No, no; going—going—I'll be gone in a minute," Robarts said, smiling, and bobbing round the table, lifting his bowler hat, running his hand round it, and taking up his real Malacca cane with the real gold band round it, engraved "George John Robarts." Then he braced his legs, and held out his hand to Mr. Moir. "Very pleased to meet you, sir."

Mr. Moir's six-foot-one came erect and performed a very genuine sagging motion, richer and more courteous than any to the same effect learnt in a school of deportment. Robarts felt that he had met one of those citizens of whom Glasgow is justly proud. Of the "proper thing" to do they know little. When they are elected to mayoralties, provostships, or kindred posts, they have to visit their solicitors to ask what is the correct mode of address towards the Royal personage whom they have to escort to the laying of the foundation stone of some public building that the city is setting up. The genuine and courteous thing comes easily to them; "yet hard, you know, and a wee bit dour at times," Mr. Robarts thought, while still appreciating.

Martin went to the outer door with Robarts—who abruptly plucked him by the lapel and whispered in his ear: "You're all right," and then in a louder voice: "Well, good-night, good-night. I'm off." When Martin returned to the room his father was standing by the fire, fumbling down into the tail pocket of his cut-away tweed coat.

"Have your tea, Martin," he said. "Have your tea. I think I'll put on a smoke if it doesn't trouble you. I had a cigar with Mr. Robarts. I'll have my pipe now."

The landlady entered.

"Excuse me, but will you have tea?" she asked.

"Look here, Martin," said Mr. Moir, ramming tobacco

in his pipe, "let us have a cup of tea just now while we discuss business, and then we'll go down to F. & F.'s, or somewhere, for a bite to eat."

My goodness! Who had she been harbouring that talked thus lightly of "a bite to eat" in F. & F.'s! She ran away to get her best china. Mr. Moir lit his pipe and drew at it several times, grunted, made one or two quaint little grabs in the air as he grunted, as if trying to catch nebulous words that floated round.

"See, see," he said, "I wonder if—won't you smoke, Martin?" and he abruptly dived in his tail pocket for his pouch, which he produced and thrust toward his son. "You don't want me to apologise, Martin, I know. You would rather have me explain. Now, now that was all right about having written to us. Your mother—I mean —I mean I hadn't been made aware of—of the letter. Um!" He scratched his chin vigorously instead of merely fingering it as was his wont in moments when he could not co-ordinate his thoughts as he desired. "Man, Martin, I'm very, very glad that you said that to me this morning about—about having written. It kept on in my head after I had gone away—kept on very badly. I had just to leave business and go—go out to Langside about that. I should really have been at Glassford Street most urgently; but I had to let business go. Things are not doing very well in Glassford Street. However, however, I'm afraid that gives me the air of the schoolboy saying: 'Oh, my sore finger!' And that's not at all what I mean."

"Say no more about it, father."

Mr. Moir looked at his son.

"I believe you're enough of a man to leave it that way, Martin," he said, "but it seems only fair, fair to *me,* man," and he gave a little nod, and a smile; and whosoever received that smile from Ebenezer Moir might

know thereby that he had crept in somehow under the fifth rib of that big man. "Man, man, Martin, you see your mother hadn't mentioned it. Now you mustn't be bitter about that, my boy. You must go easy with your mother, for your mother is a woman."

He rose and walked to and fro in the room, in grunting labour.

"You know, Martin, between ourselves, I think it is well you're not in the ware'us'—things are not what they should be. I hope you understand, Martin, that your father hadn't just let you go. As I tried to say this morning—though I'm afraid you would never think that was in my mind—I thought it would perhaps be the making of you, but I didn't understand—um!—as I say—that you had written. I can see, now, that would make it very bitter for you. And if that silence on our part," he cleared his throat, "had anything to do with driving you into unseemly society—or I should say," he added quickly, "towards making you seek as it were an antidote—I think you're rather a sensitive young man—I don't say this in disparagement; we should remember people with an artistic bent are sensitive, you know, there's no doubt about that—they *are* sensitive. Yes."

The landlady entered with a tray. He was walking up and down the room, and he waved a hand at her as if pronouncing benediction over her as he said: "Yes, yes, that will do nicely. Just set it there." For a moment she looked as if she might take umbrage, then caught his expression. He was unaware of what he had said. He was merely anxious to wave aside the interferences that added to his difficulties in finding the words that would make things better instead of worse. The click of the door as Mrs. Davidson departed brought them both back again to their base; and if the flight

had been laboured as a heron's flight it had nevertheless been of value.

"I perfectly understand, father," said Martin.

"Well, I hope you *do*," said Mr. Moir, "because I would be very deeply grieved to think that anything that has transpired, that should not have transpired, has decreased our—er—our—er—shall I say mutual esteem? And then, after all, you see I am your father, Martin, so I need not ask your permission to say that, from what Mr. Robarts has been telling me, I very greatly admire your tenacity, the way you have stuck to your guns, my boy. Yes, I think that side of it would appeal to your mother. She is a very determined woman, Martin."

He had seated himself after the landlady's departure, and now rose again, and stood with fists on hips, sadly considering a Japanese fan over the mantelshelf, his mouth puckered, breathing deeply. He felt his chin for a moment. He cleared his throat twice.

"Now, there's still one thing more," he said. "Just sit down a minute before we go. I couldn't sleep last night, and I tried to read myself to sleep with that great book, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. I found a new significance in the story about Goldsmith handing out his clothes to his landlady for her to sell them to pay the rent, and then it dawning upon him that he had turned himself into a naked prisoner. It must have been a great pleasure to Johnson to be able to come and bail him out. You understand me, Martin? You understand me, do you?"

Martin did not seem to. He was admiring his father very greatly, but he did not seem to understand. Mr. Moir made another attempt.

"Well, it was a very fine thing to be of service to the writer of that inimitable work *She Stoops to Conquer*,"

he said, "and of *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Yes. Authors and artists have often to wait for recognition. The world keeps them waiting long enough. No, no. No! Well, Martin, it would let me see that you understand—that you understand what has happened to-day, and indeed in the past few months, for I am sure your mother will see it with me, on consideration—it will let me see that you understand it was nothing at all, so to speak, if you let me call in your landlady and give her a cheque. How long do the classes still run for the term?"

"About two months."

"Well—till then. You're comfortable here? Perhaps you would like a change? Perhaps you would like something more artistic?"

"This is awfully good of you, father."

"No, no, not at all."

"Well, I'll stay in these digs," said Martin, "at any rate."

"Will you call her in, then? Or, on second thoughts, perhaps better not. Cash in advance, you know, cash in advance is not always advisable. Now—before you left home you told me that you intended to try for a scholarship. Has this evening-classes-only business set you back, or do you intend still to try at the end of this term?"

"I do."

"It would be nice if you got that. But if you should happen not to—you know very often the meretricious instead of the meritorious gets the medal—remember that I will give you the same opportunities that the scholarship would have given you. An artist should have every bit as much of a chance as a lad going into business, and—er"—he stepped over and laid a hand on Martin's shoulder—"I don't suggest coming back home—for the present. I was looking in one of your books

on your shelves the other day—you know I haven't much time for reading—and I noticed the name Emerson. I recalled it as a man who had been a friend of Carlyle's—that *Sartor Resartus* is a great book—I was just in your room, wondering what was the best plan, when my eye caught sight of it, and I picked it up, and a sentence in it took me: 'Do the thing, and you will have the power.' Now that's fine. You prosecute your studies, Martin, for the present. There's the other side of the coin—the reverse. The adage on that side is a great deal less heroic, indeed it is almost satiric, but it's very true: 'Nothing succeeds like success.' I think it would be better for you to be asked to come back by your mother than that there should be any possibility of feeling that you were *brought back* by your father. Now—now, boy, this is a difficult thing for me to say, but I will take it upon myself—I will tell your mother that I thought it better, as indeed I do, and as indeed I am saying, better that you should just stay on here now. Uh-hu!"

Then he cleared his throat again, snatched his hat.

"Now—now, shall we go and have a bite of supper, Martin?" he asked. "By the way," he added, "if you have in any way compromised yourself in the matter of that—that model, you needn't hesitate to——"

"That's absolutely all right, dad. It was really nothing—nothing at all." And he went forth—with his father as a friend.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THESE were inspiring days in Glasgow. The big commercial city was, to the best of its ability, interesting itself in Art, in Letters, and in Music. Paderewski packed the Albert Hall. At the Athenæum, literary men —or men of letters—lectured; as, for example, Mr. Zangwill upon the ghetto. A congeries of churches on the south side inaugurated a kind of joint-stock Literary Society so that their amalgamated funds might procure lecturers and pay for advertisements to announce their coming and gaslight to illuminate the meetings. Thus did literature, or at least something on the way toward literature, break down the estrangement of religious caste. For three diverse sects were of the company. On one evening adherents of the Presbyterian Church and the Free Church flocked to the United Presbyterians' edifice and listened to Mr. Le Gallienne's views upon the New Woman. Upon another evening did the United Presbyterians and the Frees join the Presbyterians in their place of worship to hear Mr. Caine deliver a lecture that ended somewhat thus: "But when I see all these things what is it that sustains me? It is this: 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'" Mr. Jerome made an appearance; but some of the elderly ladies who attended his lecture, under the belief that when literature entered the church it would be sanctified, did not find his beginning very hopeful; advancing to the reading-

desk, he coughed and commented: "I feel rather nervous. I have never been in a church before—I mean this part of it." That initial levity caused many to begrudge him praise, and to speak of his lecture as "a lot of chestnuts." Sir Robert Ball, lecturing upon the stars to the concentrating worshippers, perhaps atoned. In banks and architects' offices young men discussed a new poet, enjoyed him, but thought it premature of some critics to hail him as a new Milton, observing that in the first line of his poem the word "odour" had to be pronounced very clearly as a two-syllable word and accentuated upon the second syllable. There was enthusiasm for things other than manufacturing, if they were well done. At the little old Gaiety, since pulled down and rebuilt in more palatial but less homely fashion, different talent was welcomed. There Chevalier and Vesta Tilley, and other stars, entranced their audience.

In Art—Art with a capital, Art that does more than entertain—there was also interest. The city—when we say "the city" of course we mean only a large minority, for even in periods spoken of as being interested in Art, there were doubtless, as the erudite tell us, only a minority of the folk really interested, the majority preferring to follow the fortunes of (and shout themselves hoarse over) the centre-forwards, half-backs, goalies, and so forth, of whatever was the Queen's Park Rangers of their time—the city was proud of its John Lavery (though he hailed from Belfast), for he was a Glasgow student; and of Hornel, though it recognised what the old lady meant who, being inveigled into the Institute one day, stood agape before a Hornel picture and exclaimed: "This picture is painted differently from all the others!"; of Harrington Mann, a born Glaswegian, who had shown them a great canvas of the attack of the Macdonalds at Killiecrankie, and amazed them by his

early manner, by the way that he made his canvases to glow with warmth and light, despite a curious thickness in that early manner, almost as if it was clay instead of paint he used. And there was E. A. Walton also to be proud of, who gave them admirable trees, standing up in tranquil air. They had just bought a picture by another of their own men—Christie's *Vanity Fair*. Citizens who referred to themselves as "we taxpayers" shuffled up to have a look at it, and peeped in each other's eyes to see what the opinion was about spending the city's money upon paintings. Citizens who paid the taxes lightly also went up to look at the new purchase. Local ha'penny papers found that they had readers interested in more than murder and adultery. *The Glasgow Weekly Citizen* clipped from the classics: the literary page of *The Glasgow Evening News* had many readers, as a glance round the homing travellers on the suburban trains could testify.

In these great days Martin won the scholarship. His father was glad for many reasons. When he saw the young man's name in *The Herald,* in the list of winners of bursaries, scholarships, and medals (the first announcement either had of the good news) he spread the paper out and set it on his wife's plate. Here would be, he felt sure, an occasion for her to make peace.

"What is this?" she asked, and looked at the paper. "Oh!" She handed it back. It was as if another of the lamps was put out for Ebenezer. "Evidently, when he cares, he can win honours," said Mrs. Moir, in her frigid tones.

What could he say? Was she not a woman, to be dealt with gently? Was he not a man who could not come down to petty arguments and explanations? Besides—he still had all his old fondness for her, looking upon her as the best of women. He opened his mouth to say:

"That he did not win prizes at school surely should not be made a reason for condemning him now." But even that he left unsaid. She set him brooding. He had wanted Martin to win bursary or scholarship chiefly for her sake, to help to prove to her that Martin was now going in his right direction. For himself, he had felt that, as they were not poor people, the fees might as well be paid; they were absurdly small. His face went heavy, sign of a heavy heart.

Some kind of correspondence was now being exchanged between mother and son, but they only met in letters, had not yet seen each other. Or it might be better to say that Martin evaded his mother in letters, instead of that he met her in them. For it was a pallid correspondence. Advised to it by his father ("seeing that your mother is a woman, my boy, and she means well in her own way, I am sure"), Martin had written to her again, again expressing regret for his outbreak; but Mrs. Moir had done with that letter as with the one written on the day he left home—remained secretive about it. Had Mr. Moir not recognised Martin's handwriting on an envelope lying beside his wife's plate on the day after he gave that advice to Martin he would never have known that the boy had written. Mrs. Moir waited for a few days to go past, so that she might not seem to have been longing for Martin to write; then she replied coldly, to say that she was glad that he had repented him of his waywardness, and to assure him that she remained his loving mother. It was a formal and forced correspondence that followed, and never once did Mrs. Moir ask Martin to come back to Queensholme. Mr. Moir—trying to negotiate instead of dictate—had thought to suggest that she do so; but had decided that it was better to let time aid. He had been looking forward to the result of the examinations. If Martin dis-

tinguished himself that might help. And here was the result of that hope!

But Martin had not the staying power of his mother. He could not keep away from the house always. His Cousin Norah, when he called at Blythswood Square three weeks after the news of the scholarship was public, told him that Mrs. Moir seemed very proud of his success. Norah had been educated at boarding school and should have known the ways of women better, perhaps; but Mrs. Moir had talked eagerly to her of the absent Martin and his newly won honours. She thought Mrs. Moir was really proud of him. Martin's eyes opened in amazement over this news, for his mother said nothing to him, in her letters, of her pride.

"She talks to people quite a lot about your studies, and of how you have won a scholarship," said Norah. "I believe if you went to see her it would be all right. I expect she won't deliberately ask you to go to see her; but I would go if I were you. She is a determined lady, and wants to freeze you out. It will please her to know that you *had* to go back to see her. She will welcome you. I assure you she talks to people about you most affectionately."

So Martin went out to Queensholme, rang the bell, and, as there was a new maid, gave his name instead of asking where his mother was and going to her. The maid was not only new, but timid. She had the look as of doubting if he was called "Moir"; and he thought that if he sought Mrs. Moir out she might scream: "A burglar!" and go into hysterics. He allowed himself to be ushered, like a stranger, to the drawing-room, and there he waited. His mother entered the room, after what seemed a very long time, saying: "I am so sorry to have kept you waiting, Martin. Have you come to see me or your father?"

Strange that she did not know, with all her "mother love." He wanted to say: "To see you, mother," but her voice restrained him. He felt somewhat as he used to feel when a boy aventuring into the tunnels of Giffnock Quarries, and calling out in them to hear the dull echo overhead.

"Is father at home? I didn't think he would be at this time——"

"No, not yet. You have come to see me, then," and she took his hand in hers. "You have not forgotten your mother altogether. Oh! There is the carriage, I think." She went to the window. "Yes—I have been dressing to go out. Mrs. Smith-Smythe is to call for me. Yes, that is her carriage. I wish I could put her off, but I promised to go with her——"

Mrs. Smith-Smythe was shown in, gushing and rustling, and was introduced to Martin, bowed, and turned to Mrs. Moir to talk about matters all foreign to Martin —a meeting of protest against girls and women serving in bars. It was to be held in the drawing-room, he gathered, of a woman of title, and was rather a fluttery affair, calling for the best clothes of the assembling protesters. It was, of course, absurd of him—he assured himself—to think for a moment that his mother might tell Mrs. Smith-Smythe that she could not attend the drawing-room as she had not seen her son for months. After all, he had not written beforehand to announce his coming.

"I am a selfish beast," he thought. "Of course it is absurd. She has her life as well as I; and she had arranged to go to this meeting of protest."

Then he tried to think that it was part of her sweetness that caused her not to cancel the appointment on his arrival. She argued inside her dear head, thought he, that it was better just to break the ice on this first

visit, to say nothing about the cause of their estrangement, to say only, as she did now, putting a hand on his arm tenderly: "Well, Martin, I really will have to go. You've been terribly busy, I know, but now that you've won your scholarship, and holidays are on, we'll see more of you."

Immediately Mrs. Smith-Smythe had to ask about the scholarship and to congratulate, fussy and gushing, and very much aware of her clothes and lips and scent and bright eyes. Martin accompanied his mother and Mrs. Smith-Smythe to the carriage, shook hands with the lady of the droll name and the odour of eau-de-Cologne on her pretty lips, then took his mother's hand. They dabbed their heads together—and next minute he had closed the door, and she was bowling away, waving a hand from the window and smiling sweetly. He walked round to Mount Florida Station, wondering if it was all true. He felt as if he must touch the walls on the way (as did Wordsworth in vague moods) to know that he was really here. The thin layers of sunlight, on roofs and gables, seemed only to accentuate the sense of unreality. He cheered himself, however, by repetition of the explanations already offered by himself to himself, or tried to cheer himself.

Mrs. Moir told her husband of Martin's visit, did not keep it to herself as she kept his letters. Martin had got into the way of lunching once or twice a week with his father at the latter's club, and on the morrow, when they met there, Mr. Moir expressed himself, very sincerely, and deeply, if briefly, as much pleased by the visit. But he searched Martin's face a little anxiously, as if to find out what the young man had thought of the visit. His wife had told him very little, and that little with no enthusiasm. "No, he did not stay long. I was dressing to go out when he arrived. Mrs. Smith-

Smythe came to carry me off too, so he had to go." Mr. Moir asked no more. He was no catechist. He could never bear to hear his own voice sound at all questioning toward his wife. However! Martin had been to the house again. It was much to be thankful for. He would have been glad if the mother had expressed a desire for his return as the month went on; but perhaps she had her reasons—he would not judge her. Each made excuses for her—and tried to see that perhaps she was acting well and lovingly. Summer holidays were discussed to-day by Mr. Moir over the lunch. The Moirs were going to the Highlands—Mrs. Moir for a month, Mr. Moir for a fortnight, and for week-ends. Martin must come up.

Martin was not at all certain. He feared to go so far from home. If his mother, after he arrived, returned to her old unpleasant manner he would be hard put to it to invent an excuse for leaving, and he feared he could not summon up endurance to remain. He told his father that "a chap" at the Art School wanted him to go to Devonshire—to Clovelly, to spend a sketching holiday there. In the evening Mr. Moir repeated this to his wife, trying to find how she felt about Martin.

"I had hoped he would come with us to Grantown-on-Spey," said she, "for a part of the time at any rate. But of course if he *prefers* to go elsewhere, with a friend——"

Mr. Moir wrote to Martin that his mother seemed a little hurt at the prospect of having no visit from him when they were on holiday, and hoped that he would follow her north. So Martin joyfully cancelled the Clovelly trip—and went north. But after he had been at Grantown-on-Spey two days he wrote to his friend, Francis Alexander:

"My dear Alexander,—Please send me a telegram as follows: 'Can you come to see me at once?' Do, like a good man, wire immediately on receipt of this."

This was because Mrs. Moir had as guests three women who did nothing but quarrel with each other. There was a school-teacher; there was a girl who was studying for a diploma in foreign languages; there was a horrible woman (called Miss Tanner) who was secretary to half a dozen societies, each for preventing different things. Relations were distinctly strained between them. One of them had expected to be the only guest, was indignant at being one of three, and grew more indignant on finding that not only had Mrs. Moir invited these others to share her holiday, but was as friendly toward them as to her. She was rude to those who shared Mrs. Moir's affection with her. They laughed at her in the sweetest tones imaginable. She fell back on silence. Not a word could be got out of her. Even at meals she was mute, sitting erect, lips pressed close together when not eating.

"Why the deuce doesn't she pack her trunk and get off?" thought Martin. Next morning she was in the same sad state. The other two, at lunch time, in the strained condition of their nerves, began to argue hotly instead of making conversation—which had clearly been their object at first. The one who had brought hate to the holiday smiled at that, smiled sweetly at the cruet-stand as if she and it were exchanging confidences. Mrs. Moir, at the head of the table, attempted the impossible—tried to behave as if everything was going on quite normally. At last Martin rose—just after the soup plates had been called away. A liquid might be got down at this table; but his stomach turned against solid food.

"You will pardon me," he said. "I have no appetite."

"I am not surprised," said one of the two who were arguing wildly. "You must think we are just savages. If we don't wrangle with each other then we take the pet and sit like Sphinxes. We must be very amusing to you."

Martin expected that the Sphinx would cease to be a Sphinx then. But he did not understand these things. She ceased to smile faintly. She smiled and sneered; she seemed to be enjoying herself hugely. He left the room, sent a telegram to Alexander which read: "Don't wire me on receiving letter to-day. Am coming south already." That dispatched, he returned to the house. In the middle of the garden Mrs. Moir and one of the guests sat chatting. At the far end was the Sphinx, reading a book. Walking to and fro, trilling snatches of song in a combative tone, was the third guest, she who had sympathised with his desire to leave the table. She seemed to be the best of the three—so he thought—but the humour of the holiday struck him as too inanely tragic. He was glad he had sent off the telegram. Ascending to his bedroom he packed all the clothes he had so recently unpacked, locked and strapped his case, carried it downstairs, and advancing to his mother, said: "I say, mother, I'm so sorry. I've decided to go back to Glasgow."

"Oh, my dear boy!" she broke out.

The girl who was trilling song stopped in the middle of a bar.

"That's us! And I don't blame you," said she, and went on again with her song.

The Sphinx smiled knowingly. Just at that moment a dog-cart drove up. She rose and said to the driver: "Have you come for my trunk?" The others stared. She had her box packed already, evidently. She went off to point it out to the man and have it carried down.

Then, without a word, she climbed into the trap and departed. Martin leaned by the door, deep chuckles coming from his chest. Life is so different from most books that it often takes one by surprise. He almost decided to remain another day to see how the others would progress now that the jealous one had gone.

"Oh, Martin, dear, won't you stay on?" Mrs. Moir asked. "I am sure you are only going because of that dreadful woman."

"Well—mother—I've already wired to Alexander to expect me. I've enjoyed my two days here very much, but I don't think I should stay longer."

The humming guest carolled with delight over this announcement of pleasure in the two days. He knew that his brother John, had he been here, would have rolled on the grass with laughter at this little party, and enjoyed it immensely when he was not away fishing; but John had gone home with one of his college friends. John was not here to point out the humour, and to keep his gaze focussed upon the amusing side. Martin thought he would rather not remain. Other guests were coming up, he understood—but no men among them. The whole thing was so very different from the summer holiday house-party that any reader of may-blossom or wild-rose romance is led to expect, that he could not, simply could not, stay on. The two remaining girls said good-bye to him, one with great sweetness and ambiguous smiles, a smile that broadened when mother and son dabbed head to head, the other (the little squat one called Miss Tanner) with a sneer of disdain. Away he went—feeling that he was a brute, for he noticed that Mrs. Moir's eyes were suddenly wet with tears.

Now there was an inn near the station. And before the inn were two drover-looking men. When Martin came out of the little station, after having his bag

labelled for Glasgow, and verifying the hour of the train, he looked at them. They were picaresque-looking; Vierge would have enjoyed them. In response to his quick, but observing, glance they gave him the amicable twinkle of vagabonds, and as he drew near to them they twinkled more.

"Come and have a drink, boys?" said he.

They followed him, with their dogs—and over whisky, and anecdotes of salmon-poaching and deer-stealing, he lost the train, waited for the next, was helped into it by his two friends, who swore eternal friendship and begged him to come back again. If they were not in gaol on his return (and surely both would not be at once) they would see that he had opportunity of experiencing the joys of night salmon-poaching, or of whatever kind of poaching was in season.

He was in time to catch Alexander in his elderly house in Garnethill, of which a poet has sung the cosmopolitan charm in verses called: "Montmartre de Notre Glasgow"; and together they went south to Devon, where also (as well as on Spey side) are to be found poachers and inns. Clovelly was their headquarters, that quaint village built on either side of a rambling "street" that is a flight of stairs from the top of a cliff to its foot. Men in jerseys lounged up and down that street of many steps. Artists painted at every few paces. Tourists arrived, above, by brake from Bideford, went down to the foot of the stairs and back again. Tourists arrived, below, by steamer at the small pier (that in spring, autumn, and winter is subjected to many a lashing by the waves) climbed to the top, or rode up on donkeys, went back to the foot again, and so home to Cardiff or Bristol. Most of the painters seemed as sure of themselves as reformers or shopkeepers, and, to judge by their work, were painting Christmas calendars for

grocers to give away to customers who would cruelly inflict the daubs upon the eyes of their maids in the kitchen. Martin did not like to voice such an opinion, lest it might sound cynical and conceited—implying that he could do better! But Alexander, after a walk to the foot of the fascinating street and back again, voiced the opinion for him, gently, without heat. Thereafter they wandered far afield, from Hartland Point (where the waves are for ever roaring and smashing) to Peppercomb (the beauty of which is more scattered, less obvious, than the beauty of Clovelly), and all the while were pigeon-holing things they saw, mentally noting—which was as beneficial, perhaps, as putting up an easel on one of the steps of Clovelly and drawing a bit of wall and a jerseyed man set off thereby, shading his eyes from the sun, scanning the sea.

They sampled cider, and discovered the most harum-scarum natives, over many miles. After a fortnight of these ramblings, Alexander dragged forth his easel and canvas, and was to be seen every day going forth, hung about with his paraphernalia. Soon he had four pictures going, one of early morning on a tree near Gallantry Bower; another of noon at the same place; another of forenoon and long shadows on the hills; another of a creamy cob-walled farmhouse looking out of trees, with a gold and red light in its window, not of interior illumination, but of sunset looking into it.

The time fled, and soon Martin was back again in Glasgow at his old "digs," soon back again at the Art School. His visits to Queensholme, during the autumn and winter, were few—and were always paid when he knew that others were to be there. His brother's birthday, Christmas Day, New Year's Day were made occasions for visiting. He lived in terror of being left alone with his mother. Behind her pleasant welcomes he knew

there were thoughts held in reserve. He could look into her eyes and not once have the sense of meeting her. She evaded him. She smiled and was sweet. She smiled and was dignified. But he had an unpleasant feeling, on the few occasions that he spent any time at Queensholme, that she was watching him, and waiting to come to grips —not to come to full peace. But resentment he had none. Her appearance of ageing, her oddly plaintive look at times, moved him deeply. Of his work he never spoke; nor did she. It was a subject held taboo.

CHAPTER II

The relations between mother and son remained in the same condition during the winter and spring. Mr. Moir resigned all hope of having Martin back again at Queensholme. It seemed to him—from various indications—that Martin's profession was the root of the trouble. If Art were mentioned she had always some disparaging question to ask, very sweetly, in a tone as of one faintly interested who had heard rumours of unrighteousness. She would ask if it were not so that artists were rather lazy, rather this, rather that. Martin's first published drawing appeared in a local weekly. It was most promising pen work. The Big Man (to whom Martin doubtfully showed it) looked at it keenly and handed it back with his: "Keep on." Mr. Moir, when Martin gave it to him, whipped on his glasses to look at it, all excitement, and said: "Oh, splendid! Splendid! I must buy copies of this to send to people. Splendid!" He read the joke underneath—and memorised it. He gave a copy of the issue to his cashier, and was interested to hear the cashier's appreciation. He left copies in a restaurant after lunch, and when the waiter said: "Your paper, sir," he answered: "Oh, that's all right—finished!" and half turned, thinking to say: "There's a cartoon by my son in it—his first published drawing." But he did not. He was highly pleased, but he felt he must not make an elderly ass of himself. He carried a copy home to Mrs. Moir and showed it to her. She read the joke first. There was a "hic" in brackets, in the midst of a remark made by one of the two characters

who figured in the drawing. Having frowned over the joke she eyed the drawing coldly, then handed back the paper.

"By Martin, my dear, by Martin," said Mr. Moir. "His first published drawing."

"If Martin is being trained to be an artist so as to make drawings of drunken men I fail to see what a great and fine profession it is that he is so set upon."

"Oh, my dear!" murmured her husband from deep in his chest. "Where's your sense of humour? And—and where's your—I thought you would be delighted."

"I can't be delighted with drawings of drunken men, and drunken jokes," she assured him.

It was such disappointment, one coming on the other, that made Mr. Moir renounce his hope of seeing Martin again—as he might say—under the parental roof. He lied to his son when, on their next meeting, Martin said:

"Did mother see that drawing?"

"Yes."

"Was she pleased?"

Mr. Moir drew a breath.

"*De*-lighted," said he.

"What did she say?"

"I can't remember exactly—at any rate, rest assured—rest assured—believe me—*de*-lighted."

"I'm jolly glad," said Martin. "I'll work better for that."

Mr. Moir stared at the table-cloth, and drummed with his fingers. Like Peter he lied a third time: "Yes—yes—*de*-lighted." He drew comfort from the good terms on which the brothers met. Nor was he sorry, summer coming on, when John announced that he had "fixed up" with Martin to go for a walking tour with him in the holidays. He had been worried over the

question of summer holidays, feeling that Martin should come with them to whatever rustic retreat they sought; but the air of acerbity around Mrs. Moir, even on the brief visits that Martin paid to Queensholme, made him feel that a full fortnight of mother and younger son together would be depressing. Mrs. Moir frowned a moment over John's announcement, but she could not well censure Martin for not wishing to spend the holidays with his father and mother when John was not planning to do so.

It was arranged that after holidays were over John would remove to Bradford, to the mills; so there was further reason why this year the boys should spend a holiday together; there would be less opportunity for meeting in the future. Holidays over (the tramp to Callander, through the Trossachs up to Oban, through Appin to Glencoe, across country to Nairn and Inverness, where the tramping ended, and they took train home again), John went off to the mills, and Martin spent the rest of the vacation in the parks, sketching loafers, nurse-maids, playing children, meditative policemen, swans and their rippling wakes; and towards the end of the next term came into a period of unrest, was very acutely conscious of a desire to expand, to advance, to know more, to do much better.

This restlessness began about the time that the Big Man invited certain of the men—his pupils—to his own studio, where a supper was set. To the students so invited, half a dozen, it was no small honour, for present at the board were other men—men who had passed from the school and had already done much in the galleries to show that good things, amazingly good things in the way of paint and canvas, came out of Glasgow. Glasgow —the commercial capital—not Edinburgh—the political capital—was winning respect for Scottish artists beyond

the country's borders. Pride, instead of self-satisfaction, inspired the young men in Glasgow. Also they had something close at hand to aim towards. Their immediate predecessors, the men who were winning this respect for Glasgow, were so very little older than they, were still "these young men" to the art critics. Happy was he who could remark: "I met Christie the other day"—or: "A man I know who is a great friend of Lavery's." Martin was greatly excited one day in Sauchiehall Street when one of his fellows said: "I say, do you see that chap there in the dark tweeds—that chap with eyeglasses—that's Harrington Mann!" They worshipped their predecessors and wished to do well.

At this supper of the Chief's were one or two of the Big Young Men, really there in the flesh, to do honour to a flying visitor from Paris. He was no self-centred man, this visitor. Marcell Méry Bertheret was interested in more than Marcell Méry Bertheret. He appreciated praise; he desired it; but he was not unduly inflated over his reception. He was gratified at the reception, but not puffed up. Next day he visited the school to see what was being done there. Martin, at work upon a wash of an Italian boy, felt a tap on his shoulder. It was the Chief.

"You might come, Moir," he said; and Martin, running his flat oil-brush (with which he did his wash black-and-whites) between thumb and finger, set it down, wiped his hand on his waistcoat behind, under the jacket, and followed. In the Chief's room was the slender Frenchman who had taken the place of honour last night. Martin noted the cut of his coat—cut high as the waistcoat, which was also high, showing little shirt at the neck; it seemed almost clerical, gave him just a touch of the sacerdotal. He wondered whether it was the man's own whim—or his country's mode.

"Here he is," said the Chief. "This is the young man who did them. I have taken the liberty of telling M. Méry about that colour-blindness of yours."

"I am not," said the Frenchman, extending his hand, a cool hand, and dry, "an art critic. I will never, when you have arrived, throw in your face a defect you hide so well. Why should he not," he asked, turning to the Chief, "make his defect into his distinction?" It sounded like "distencion"—but if we were to spell all our characters' speeches phonetically then would we be spelling phonetically all the time, and most assiduously when the English characters speak! The accent gave an additional charm to the voice, made more haunting the long and inspiring interview that followed. Méry Bertheret had been arrested by the work of this student. He was further interested on hearing of the colour trouble—somewhat as a doctor would be interested in a man who sings and carols with one lung. When Martin at length shook hands with him, and returned to his Italian boy and the wash (that had run in his absence and was all splotchy), he felt that it was not merely to be given the pleasure of shaking hands with Méry Bertheret that he had been called to the Chief's room. There was something more than that in it, he thought; and a month later he knew—when the Chief jumped out of his room and beckoned to him as he went past. The Chief, having explained that he had received a letter from Méry, who had taken some of Martin's work away with him, and now returned it, had important matters to discuss.

"You could stay here and go on in the old way," said he. "You could draw from the Life, go to the galleries on Students' day—so forth. But I've wanted you to get into the esteem of some etcher. You are ready for a step—a stride—movement—broadening. Méry

writes me that he has shown your stuff to Rastignac——"

"Does Rastignac take pupils?" Martin broke out.

"No—but he is willing to have you up to help him. Méry tells me that he showed your stuff to him and sang your praises. Rastignac asked a king's ransom to have a student in his studio. He said he could get all the help he wanted from young Parisians who admired his work, and wanted to learn of him, without sending to Scotland. But Méry showed him your stuff, and that put a different complexion on it. And Death, too, has now been your friend, as it will one day be another man's. The world's crowded, and there are more men than shoes. The pet of Rastignac has gone and died. My advice to you is to go right over. This is an excellent chance for you. I suggest that you go over to Méry's *atelier*. Tell your father to come up and see me and let me have a chat with him over it, if you can't get him to stump up the board and lodgings, and so on."

But there was no need for that. Ebenezer Moir was now on terms with Martin that allowed of that young man telling him not only the full story of Méry Bertheret and Rastignac, but of "pulling his leg" over the Chief's remark about "stumping up." Mr. Moir listened to all with great interest, and at the last part broke into laughter.

"If it's like that," said he, "you won't find your father's purse shut. Man! It's an investment! When these fellows—that are big men, I gather—go on so about your work, it will be as if I insure your life for you when I hand you a cheque to carry you over to them."

CHAPTER III

Martin Moir was an interesting pupil to that somewhat frail-looking man who, like the Chief in Glasgow, brought out of his students what was in them as well as teaching them much in an oddly containedly-nervous way—a quiet man, with deep-set hazel eyes, short-pointed chestnut beard, hair cut as with one clip of scissors across his forehead, making a kind of fringe something like that affected by the Glasgow "shawlies"—as the girls who are to be seen in the neighbourhood of the Trongate of Glasgow, wearing shawls over their heads, are locally called. In Méry Bertheret's work there were signs that he had looked upon Holbein's portraits with respect. His precision was Dutch. His nervous vigour was of his own period. There were, of course, in Paris, young men who commented: "Abracadabra!" on hearing his name spoken by some lover of art who knew naught of the *dernier cri.* There is always *le dernier cri* in art—much as there is always the last murder or divorce case. But Martin was devoted to Master Méry, who had the skill to show him more deeply his own capacities, more greatly the world outside. When he found there were those who jeered at mention of his name, he withdrew from them and went on with his work and his devotion, moved, in the poet's words, by a love of love, a hate of hate, a scorn of scorn. He had no jealousies. And lacking jealousy he had devotion. The Master's work was to him sacred. He shuddered once on hearing a man who was painting a Madonna say "There! That will make the —— people sit up!" It seemed not the attitude, neither to the subject, nor to the expected throng before the canvas.

Epater was a word he did not find attractive. Méry was inspiring, invigorating.

"You have to make your defect your excellence," said he, discussing the "colour-blindness" of his pupil. "Ah! But if your enemies some day discover that you cannot see the rays of light coming forth of the pink—how they will rejoice. You may have for biographee some specialist in the eyes." Dr. Gould had not yet written of Lafcadio Hearn's myopia, for a woeful case in point, in his book, *bizarre et odieux,* as Hearn's French biographer has called it, recalling to mind Baudelaire's censure of Griswold (Poe's biographer) in the words: "He has perpetrated an immortal infamy." But although he of the delicate manner, instructing Martin in painting, was amazed to find how keen a sense of tones had this young hopeful of the faulty colouring, it was with the etching needle that the young man was chiefly employed, and in assisting Alexandre Rastignac in his studio to pull his etchings of great price. Rastignac was a dapper man, wearing shoes with large bows on them, shoes always highly polished, clothes elegantly cut. He had a great black beard, and there was a suggestion of the Turk about him—almost a suggestion that he might have a harem somewhere! But soon one found that most of his fire went forth upon his work. He reminded Martin of a phrase read somewhere, a phrase advising that one should live like a bourgeois, think like a god. Despite that glint in Rastignac's eye he was a man who loved his home, who sought neither the gaiety nor the advertisement of the artists' balls, enjoyed a quiet day in the country with his wife and little girl, the little girl in between holding a hand of each. Some clever young caricaturist limned him so, with wife and child, and when he saw the thing that was meant for a jest he looked at it, instead, as if it were a dear symbol.

"I have no pacience," he would say, "with preetiness. There is more beauty in a string of ohnions hanging in an interior of an Italian shop than in a preety weemen. But you have to make the etching of the preety weemen, because the ohnions do not buy their own portraits. Accursed world! Egotism of the Eternal Feminine! I am besieged by the preety weemen to make the etching of them. They come to me, arrayed in finery, for to tempt me, as eef they were to sit for the photograph with the high poleesh. They will not buy my etching of the Espanish sailor with the ohnions hanging from a steeck —even the old steeck is rich in tone, but the ohnions are more beautiful than their—*nacre*, how you call?—mudder of peril. Grand God! Eef I had not the taste for bric-à-brac, and my leetle girl to educate, I would etch nozing but the ohnions."

Onions were a kind of symbol to him. They stood to him for the things that rather would he do than the dry-points of women in plumed hats and with fur muffs —although he did these excellently well. He would talk and talk, on and, growling and growling, after this fashion, while he worked, black and bulky over his plates and his press.

"Will there come again, I ask you to tell me, will there come again somebody to buy one etching of the streets of Paris that is by a man alive? They buy Méryon now because he is dead. I too would etch Paris, as I see it, not as Méryon saw it, but they say, 'No! geef me the preety weemen!' Veeslair has given you Anglish the etching not of preety weemen; but look you how he must behave to have them buy! It is necessaire that he must behave himself in such a manner that the people will say: 'I have an etching by that extraordinaire man, M. Veeslair!' It is an injuicetice. For example, even Veeslair cannot live on his etching of your

river Thames unless he make the furore by taking one weemen to law for repairing her house next door and annoying him with the sound of the masons. People say: 'Extrordinaire! Who is this M. Veeslair? Who is this extrordinaire man? He is an etcher? Ah! let us haf an etching of this extrordinaire man. Oh, what a peety it is not an etching of preety weemen! Never min,' they say, 'it is by that extrordinaire man!' Bah! Ah la, la! I haf speet on thees. Vere is my—my—mouchoir?"

From playing Sancho—but an eager Sancho—to this man, and from doing his best (when he was not assisting Rastignac) for the sake of Méry—that was how Méry inspired him—he seemed to want to do well so that Méry would not be disappointed in him!—and for the sake of Art, and for the sake of himself—Martin came home, after three years, to spend a month in Glasgow. His summers, when the *atelier* and the studio were closed, he had spent in Picardy. John was in Bradford now, overseeing the mills. His father had begun to collect postage stamps as well as shells, as if requiring two hobbies instead of one with the increasing years. Mr. Moir received Martin with a quiet warmth, as though he were too glad to see him to be effusive. His mother received him with a vast deal of shoulder clapping, and with an exuberance that lasted till he had sat down—then ebbed.

"I begin to be glad that you were so determined to go in for art," said Mr. Moir, talking over his work. "The business is not what it used to be."

But his mother's view was that if both sons had been in the warehouse it might have picked up instead of becoming more confined—and this she voiced dryly, quickly adding that of course it didn't matter now, and it was good to see Martin again.

"No," said her husband, "it would be the same if the whole staff were of the family. It is simply the changing times."

Mrs. Moir, it appeared, had almost adopted a young woman—a most amazing young woman in Martin's eyes, a graduate, a holder of diplomas for knowledge of botany, paleo-botany, *and* mathematics. It was inevitable that she should hate the artist. And as it was Mrs. Moir's dream that she should marry Martin, to steady him (she had really been mothering her with that end in view), the holiday was rendered miserable. The protegee was painfully shy at first. But very soon Martin and she were boring each other exceedingly, Mrs. Moir looking on, poor woman, with the mistaken idea that they were enjoying themselves. They were diametrically opposed. Where Martin talked of "moods," Sarah Lane talked of "genus." Where she talked of "geological formation," Martin meditated upon "atmosphere." They bored each other heartily, and very soon the protegee was being rude to him. Her rudeness was not altogether due to distaste for him. Sensual at bottom, she must either be, when in converse with men, attracting them or repelling them. There must be emotion. Further, too, she fostered a pathetic notion—but nevertheless a very usual one—that a medal for mathematics and a diploma for botany were really diplomas and medals to vouch for a right to sneer.

The first week Martin was seldom at home. He went out and about with his father. He renewed old friendships, calling (among others) on Wilson—who was still in the old studio in West Regent Street. His room seemed not to have been touched. Martin noticed a cigarette-end, old and dry, with black end protruding from the littered table. It seemed to be the same cigarette that had been there years ago. Probably it

was! He was still painting and philosophising, finding his way. He wanted to paint portraits, but how, he asked, was he to live on portrait-painting with his views? He wanted to know, among other things, how a portrait-painter—if he was a man who could sit by the hour watching rooks in their village in their trees—could paint the portraits of men who find sport in shooting rooks.

"They can't both shoot your rooks and give you money to paint their portraits," he suggested. "If I did paint their portraits, what a revelation they would be!" He began to laugh. "I really think I should go in for it—'Portrait of a Shooter of Grouse by a man who loves everything with feathers on it, whether it sings, croaks, squeaks, or twitters.' It *would* be a revelation! It would be my truth and their caricature—and there would be law cases, and a jury would sit and look at my picture, and the jury would say——" He paused, thoughtful.

"What would the jury say?" Martin asked, highly interested, as any artist, or sociologist, will understand.

"I don't know. I'm feeling my way. I'm not ready to pass an opinion on that yet. I'm feeling my way, feeling my way, thinking things out, staring at things a lot, painting a little, leaving denunciation and statements of facts and iconoclasm and reformations—for the present—to the utterly ignorant. I'm not utterly ignorant. I've got that length. I know enough to shut my mouth and open my eyes and stare at things, and think a lot, and paint a little."

"Do you still sing your old hymn?"

"Oh yes. When I'm sad, and when I'm happy, and when I'm puzzled, I've always the old song."

Martin found Wilson, with such odds and ends of talk, oddly stimulating. After visiting him he went away in a frame of mind like that which Mr. Henry

James (in his *Partial Portraits*) says he was wont to know on departing from meetings with Turgenieff.

He visited his Uncle John in Blythswood Square. John Moir, Ebenezer's brother, had been in the sugar business. Those who dealt in sugar were once affluent, anon well-to-do. It all depends, of course, upon one's standards of wealth. The man in the street, with a heel off his boot, looking for twopence, for so much worth of swipes, might have shown his teeth in a snarl over the sympathy wasted upon the Glasgow and Greenock sugar families when the smash came, and wish he was only half as poor. John Moir did not now consider himself wealthy; and only because he was of a philosophical turn of mind did he look upon himself even as what he called "just comfortable."

Mrs. Harringway once described this brother of Ebenezer's to someone as the kind of man who would take cramp in his knee rather than disturb the cat that sat thereon. He had more inclination, and found more time, than his brother for the pursuit of those things that, to one such as Martin, were the chiefer glories of life. A thin and small edition of Ebenezer, so that one felt inclined to smile at the resemblance (it was as if some jocular wizard had waved a wand over Martin's father and sharpened him all over), he had his tastes and withheld his opinions. When people dinned any subject at him he seemed gradually to become more and more sharp; his nose seemed sharper; he even put his finger-points together in front of him, and gathered himself together in his chair, till he seemed more like an edge than a bulk. Mrs. Moir hated him —and he reserved his opinion of her. He never discussed people behind their backs. But it was to be noted that when he wanted to eat a cutlet and drink a bottle of wine with his brother, he always invited him to his club

instead of going out to Queensholme. He might have invited Ebenezer to Blythswood Square, but as he did not visit at Queensholme he feared that to invite Ebenezer thither might suggest an opinion on the *ménage* at Langside and hurt Ebenezer's feelings. He was averse to hurting anybody. He was defensive—not as a cat, but as a chameleon. He effaced himself and paid no heed when he came into combative society; left his sharpening and diminishing body in the chair, but took his spirit off to consider his china vases, his pots of tall dried grass from the West Indies, and his books.

These told not only the man interested in philosophy and travel, but the man who felt the charm of his own land. A thin little volume by one Robert Bain, called *In Glasgow Streets,* had a place on his shelves. Alexander Smith's verses had an added interest to him because of his connection with Glasgow. Limmon of Kirkintilloch figured there too, though John Moir was not so enthusiastic about his one famous line as many, and merely said: "Yes, I know it!" when it was thundered at him:

"The long roar, on the long shore, of the immemorial sea."

He even possessed a copy of an old book which he could not read at all. It was in his shelves simply because its author had lived out yonder at Eaglesham—a hillside village, southward, that looks across to the smoke of Glasgow, near enough for the villagers to see the low clouds of winter evening faintly illuminated by the city's lamps. He wanted Martin to make an etching of a part of the river that always fascinated him when going down in the "sugar brokers' train" to the sugar-brokers' rendezvous, bourse, or whatever it is called, at Greenock. He had it in his mind's eye. Slow, and gentle-voiced, he described it—the broad river (with its narrow chan-

nel marked out by stone towers) up and down which, beyond the flats of mud, the great steamers thrashed. D. Y. Cameron had etched Dumbarton Rock. He had a proof of that hanging in his library. He wanted Martin, some day, to make an etching of the other shore, with the palisades of the timber people, the queer high fences stretching out enclosing acres of mud, or acres of shallow water—according to the tide—and these desolate fields all full of logs, making the spaces between the gaunt palisades look like weird, uncertain, tessellated pavements.

Martin discovered on this visit that behind the thin, sharp nose, the thin face with wine veins in the cheeks, there dwelt a kind of enthusiastic quietist. Highly sensitive to interests around him, he was in a mood for work by the evening, he who had wondered, waking that morning, if what was his chiefest interest in life, his grand passion, was perhaps nothing at all, nothing at all! Eventually he did make an etching (as his admirers know) of these timber enclosures along the south shore of the Clyde, capturing their weird and desolate aspect; showing the palisades stretching among flats of mud and water that reflect the sunset; the logs in their hundreds like great penned monsters. He was very happy here. He felt, in Blythswood Square, that he must be doing things. There was joy in life again; it was worth while.

In the presence of his mother he had found himself not only in the mood of the depressed king's refrain: "Vanity of vanities—all is vanity," but was unpleasantly introspective as well. She seemed to be always doubtful of him—not so much of his capacities as of him. There was also a nervous agitation and discontent in her vicinity, not a discontent that spurred, but a discontent that depressed. She was mournful in her influence as the Book of Job. She seemed to be looking

into him for depravities, reading him for signs of them. In Paris, away from her, he led a life moral even according to her idea of morality. But he feared that if he were much in her neighbourhood, he would rush forth some strained and depressed day of hopelessness, and incontinently inaugurate a harem for diversion and forgetfulness! He felt suddenly sorry, sitting at his uncle's table, for his father sitting at that other. How the protegee must bore Mr. Moir with her soul-less eyes! Here was inspiration. There was depression. Here was "Do!" There was "Do not!" Here were joys. There were hates. When he found himself studying Uncle John keenly, with a view to making a drawing of him, he felt suddenly pained and guilty. He had never made a drawing of his father; he must do that some day! Because he had promised to return to Queensholme in three days, he returned there, in time for lunch. The protegee, at table, began to talk of "auras," and passed on to "influences." It was a one-sided conversation; but Martin, endeavouring to be sociable, admitted: "I know a girl who carries about with her a book of poetry just for the pleasure of its company." The graduate raised her head. She imaged the vague "girl" was a sweetheart, and wanted to hurt. "How quaint!" she said, in that voice that such women have the art of, and with that little smirk at her plate, eyes drooping, that is meant to insult, but can be denied if commented upon. The girl was his cousin Norah—and Martin felt a desire to draw his foot over the protegee. After lunch his mother took him aside, said she was glad he had come back again, hoped his uncle was well, and his cousin, and then began to load him with a list of Miss Lane's fine qualities.

"I would like to see you settled," she said. "And a really brilliant wife is good. Men don't like clever

wives, because they are put in the shade by them. They feel jealous of their cleverness. But a clever wife—Sarah Lane, for example——"

"My dear mother!" he cried out, and laughter came. "Oh, my good mother, she is anathema to me!"

"Well, well," replied Mrs. Moir, determined to be patient instead of resentful. "That is just what I am saying. A good, clever wife, one you could talk to——"

"My dear mother, the average man is ruined and killed by barren knowledge; but women stuffed full of barren knowledge are just a trifle more pestiferous."

Mrs. Moir had more difficulty in keeping down anger now.

"And I was going to suggest," she continued, in the tone of one aggrieved, "that to-morrow you and she go to the Corporation Galleries——"

"I have already arranged to go down to Loch Fyne with Norah," he said. "Besides," he added, "she is almost as loathsome as that Miss Tanner. They are both savages—the only difference is that this savage has taken a medal for knowing things that have had no effect on her."

"Oh!" she said, with hauteur in her voice. "You bring that episode up again, do you? I have said nothing of it—but I have not forgotten. You ought really to have apologised for leaving Grantown as you did. I have not forgotten that!" and thereafter they were back again at the old cold angle toward each other.

He went to Inveraray with Norah by the *Columba,* going aboard at the Broomielaw instead of taking train to Gourock and boarding the vessel there, choosing this river-trip so that Norah might see the shipbuilding yards on the river just below Glasgow. Listening to her father and Martin talking of their pictorial effect from riverwards (to say nothing of their astounding clatter and

clanging) she had felt that she lacked an experience and must have it supplied. It meant a very early departure. Martin, out at Queensholme, rose at half-past four and was gone before the house was awake. To his father there was nothing to object to in this trip with Cousin Norah. But Mrs. Moir commented, at breakfast, that they did not seem to be going to see much of Martin on his holiday. "The house," said she, "might be an hotel by the way he behaves"; and Ebenezer pondered, quiet as a judge keeping calm to do justice, trying to see both sides. Sketching the fishing-boats in Loch Fyne the young people lost the return steamer, so stayed there for the night. And when Martin came back to Queensholme Mrs. Moir was very serious.

"It is not right!" she said. "Two young people like you! You compromise Norah by doing a thing like that. I am afraid the laxity of Gallic manners is not good for you. You might have respect for Norah as well as for yourself."

He did not say: "Be damned to you" this time. He said: "Thank you very much for your kind interest."

"Oh, Martin, Martin! My *motherly* interest!"

"Your *motherly* interest then," he said, and hastened on to add: "I won't be home to-night. Uncle John wants me to spend some more days with him. I only came back here to-day after seeing Norah home because I knew you would expect me."

She looked cold as steel at him.

"I suppose I *shall* see you again before you return south?" she asked.

He took fire at that. He had so intended, and the suggestion that perhaps he had not went to his head like poison.

"I don't know," he said. "I'll drop you a note when I decide."

He left home this time feeling very miserable indeed. There seemed some evil spirit always hanging over him and his mother when they met. He lunched with his father before going up to Blythswood Square, and in course of the meal some part of the talk suggested Sarah Lane to him, so that he asked abruptly: "What is that corpse with the degrees doing, hanging on to mother?"

Mr. Moir chuckled a momentary grim chuckle.

"I don't know, my boy, I don't know," said he. "Your mother thinks her a very brilliant girl, but she strikes me as rather sneering and cynical. However! I must not object. I have my hobbies, your mother has her protegee."

"And the protegee has her man-hatred," said Martin grimly.

"Well, well," answered the father, "I suppose we all have our hobbies. I have my conchology and—and stamps; I can hardly call it philately yet, can I? I didn't begin till you went to France. I believe it was seeing a stamp of La République put me on to it. And your mother has er—er, well—her New Woman Movements."

"I don't see it, dad. I do not catch the analogy," said Martin, and was sorry next moment.

"Well, well, perhaps no more do I," said Mr. Moir, but the subject was dismissed.

Martin mounted up to Blythswood Square by Bath Street, a stately street the lines of which always pleased him, as they must attract and please most artists. There is one study of it, indeed, that it would be hard to better, by Muirhead Bone, to be found in a locally-published book on the city.

Three days Martin tarried at Uncle John's, making a few charcoal studies of Cousin Norah; then, being softened of heart, he went back to Langside the day before that on which he must train south again. His mother gave him so sweet a welcome that he thought all was once more on the fair way to peace and goodwill between them. But suddenly, even as the hope became a belief, the belief was shattered, the hope shaken.

"Was your idea to stay here to-night?" she asked.

"Yes, to be with you on my last night."

"Oh!" she seemed perturbed. "Oh well, now, let me see—you did not seem certain when you went off to see Uncle John, so I invited a friend who is coming to the Conference of Mothers to stay here. I wonder what I can do. I had intended her to have your old room—you see Miss Lane has the spare room. She is to arrive some time this evening. When you went off to visit your uncle again," she repeated, and the old cold intonation crept into her voice again—the intonation that held something maddening to Martin, "you left it so vague."

"Please don't worry," he replied. "I'll go off to-night. I may as well."

She was now, in her turn, annoyed at the eagerness in his voice. She had intended merely to be retaliatively cold to him for the rude way he had treated Sarah Lane, and to punish him for the manner in which he had set off to see his uncle. But they had one quality in common.

"Oh, very well," said she. "I need not wonder any more where I can put you up."

When Mr. Moir came home in the evening he seemed a thought regretful that Martin could not stay overnight. But Martin did not tell him that his intention had been to do so, and Mrs. Moir did not explain.

"I'm sorry you have to go so soon," said Mr. Moir,

looking doubtful, wondering if there had been more "trouble," but not pressing the point, lest there had been trouble, and his pressure might uncover it. "Let sleeping dogs lie" was one of his adages.

"Oh, of course, work! work!" said he. "It must not be neglected for all the holidays in the world. Quite right! Quite right!"

CHAPTER IV

Immensely glad for himself Martin went back to the other world—to canvases and etching plates, and to that society in which he could feel sociable. But all too often his mother's face came up and held him from work —held him not now with anger, nor with any bitterness. There were times when the memory of her made him feel that all his work was futile. Next moment he would be sorry for her, and assure himself that if he could get deep into her heart he would find cause why she was toward him as she was, and would pity her. As he was now doing sketches and occasional drawings for publication, he sent her the magazines in which they appeared. She wrote a weekly letter, but hardly ever mentioned receipt of the magazines, so at last he asked definitely if she had received one paper which contained a drawing that had given him great pleasure in the doing. Some one had told him it was like a Degas by Glackens! Yes, she replied, she had seen it, and thought it a pity that he should make studies of musical-hall dancers, for there was an air of vulgarity about music-hall life. That was all she had to say, after long waiting. Better her ignoring silence! All that he had thought of as he made that drawing was the upcast footlight glow, and the catching of the *danseuse* in movement, with that upward fire on her.

He abstained from sending any more studies of that order. He carefully selected—and at length sent her a Parisian journal in which was a character drawing, a pitiful study (with pity implicit, if not tearfully implicit,

in the very drawing of it), a study of an old gutter woman. Millet painting "The Man with the Hoe," Rodin making "La Vieille Haulmière" were not, at least, more pitiful than this student, putting down his "Old Age and Rags." He sent her that journal after she had written once or twice: "When am I to see more of your work?" The question, considering her former silence followed by adverse comment, gave him fresh sense of not understanding her. Still, he was glad to have something—something that she would surely appreciate—to send in response to her reiterated request.

But there came no recognition of it. It might have been lost in transit—were it not that she responded to comments on other matters referred to in the letter which accompanied it. He dropped a hint, when he wrote again, that he would like to know if she cared for the "Old Age and Rags." He mentioned that Méry Bertheret had praised it, saying: "How you have caught the whole wretchedness!" He did not give the rest of Méry's comment; it was not to the purpose—it was of himself more than of the drawing: "But does she feel it as much as you who look on? It must hurt you, Moir, to see like that."

Mrs. Moir did not so much as acknowledge receipt. He let the matter rest; something made him unable to ask again if she had received it. After all, it was better to have the drawing ignored than damned, for he had set down the Old Woman in a mood almost sacred.

Weeks passed with occasional letters in which neither referred to anything in the way of charcoal, pencil, brush, or etching-needle. And then, maybe after two months, she wrote again: "Why do you neglect me with your work? Am I not to see any of it?"

He sent her, without comment, a reproduction of "The Summer is Ended . . ." (a plate given away

with the *Art Review*), showing a secluded square, shuttered windows, the café chairs stacked up one above the other, and between us and it, a leafless birch. Her reply to that was that Mrs. Harringway—"your old friend"—during a visit, had spoken of it, and, finding that she had not seen it, had sent her a copy on her return home. She had thus seen it weeks ago, and wondered when her son was going to let her have a copy. She liked it. She was glad that he had sent it to her at last, so that she might have an opportunity to say so! She was glad that he had sent it at last, though sorry that he had had to be asked. She liked it very much indeed—"the more especially that," she ended, "there are no figures in it making mockery of age." He should have hardened his heart altogether, doubtless; should have told himself that a man of his age ought not to ask for the admiration of a woman simply because she is his mother. The "Well done!" of such an one would be as valueless as her censure; so perhaps he should have said, and let the matter go. But he did not say so; neither did he dismiss the matter. He brooded. He brooded over that letter. He writhed inwardly. He could not work with any heart for many days. What on earth had come to her? Was it the queer society she kept? What was it? There must be some reason.

"O God, O God," he found himself moaning one day, head on drawing-board. And then he pulled himself together with something like fear, there was such a clutching at his heart, such a queer feeling in his head.

Later on, John came over to rest from much application in Bradford. He was full of talk of his work, his position, his responsibility at the Mills, delighted to find himself doing well and in a position of trust. Among the matters that the brothers discussed was, of course, Queensholme, all the life there. John spent occasional

week-ends in Glasgow; and, from his reports, affairs seemed to be still much as they had been when Martin was last at home. To John they were highly amusing. The old friends were dropping off, he explained, except those who were keeping in touch with "craziness," as he expressed it. He told of meetings held in Mrs. Moir's drawing-room, meetings of vindictive people who all seemed to hate each other cordially. If one of the speakers paused for a word, and appealed for aid to someone with: "Oh, do give me the word—I forget it for the moment!" he (or she) was met with a grin that reminded John of "that sketch in that book—what-do-call-it?—*Alice in Wonderland*—of the Cheshire cat!" But it all seemed trivial to him; he noted it, was amused, and a little disgusted; that was all.

"They appear, every one of them, to be deep in grievances and wrongs," he finished.

"Poor old mother," said Martin. "These people are just like leeches hanging round her."

"Oh, it's all a diversion for her! She enjoys it. It's exciting, you see."

"It's awful!" Martin said. "They should be cold-shouldered away. What does dad do? He never mentions them when he writes."

"Dad! Oh, he sticks to his own room when they are there. Miss Tanner coming down the stairs from The Cattery——"

"The what?"

"That's my name for the 'at homes.' Ever meet Miss Tanner?"

"A little fat woman, getting on for fifty, with blue eyes and dark yellow hair rolled hideously over her forehead?"

"That's right. Mrs. Harringway made me laugh about her. She said to the mater one day: 'Who is that

little woman you introduced me to—I didn't catch her name?'—The mater said: 'Which little woman?'—And then said Mrs. Harringway: 'The one who looks as if she had a thought in the back of her mind as to whether she should take one or two pills to-night.' Pretty good, eh? The mater didn't like it, but it gets her all right. I roared. Well, coming downstairs one night this Miss Tanner talked loud about how women devote their lives to their husbands' pursuits, and how men never take any interest in their wives. The old man was just going into his room; he was carrying one of his shell drawers, and she asked what it was. So he told her. 'How amusing!' she said. 'A grown man like you!' and kittened at him as she spoke, so that he should take her cheek pleasantly. And when she saw that he was going to stand for it she went on: 'I'm amazed, Mr. Moir, that you don't do any social work. How queer to collect shells when there is so much to do!' "

"What did he say?" asked Martin, taking it all *au grand sérieux* of course, unlike his brother. "Did he tell her to go to the devil?"

"Would *you* tell her to go to the devil, Martin, old boy? Not he! But he did what you wouldn't do! He said: 'My good woman, if I hadn't a diversion for my mind, such as this, I could not keep my mind fixed on business every day, the way I do, so as to give my wife money to hand over to your societies.' "

"Good for him! That shut her up."

"Not it! You don't shut up these people that way. She just glared at him and said: 'Ah! Wait! Wait! We'll be giving the *men* pocket-money for their societies before long, and we'll throw your dependent condition in *your* teeth for a change.' He said: 'Well, I'll be glad of the rest, my good woman, I'll be glad of the rest.' And she yelled—really yelled at him: 'Rest!

Rest! We can't make you bear the children unfortunately'—(my hat, Martin!)—'I suppose we'll have to go on doing that!' And then the old man began to laugh, stood chuckling away to himself with the drawer in his hand, and looking as her as if she was a funny thing."

"It's a wonder he doesn't take to drink," said Martin.

John raised his head, looked at him as if to speak, and then fell silent; but Martin was brooding too deeply on the pictures of life at home that his brother conjured up for him to notice the gesture and surmise its significance.

Martin introduced John to many of his friends; he saw show Paris, and the other Paris, then suggested a trip to the Boul' Mich'—because he had heard of it. Martin did not think he would find that quarter amusing, but he accompanied his brother, and the gaiety of the Café d'Harcourt made him sad for days. "A man would need to be half drunk to take any pleasure in one half of what they call the gaiety of Paris," said John, and proposed a jaunt into open country. After considering many neighbourhoods, they fled the whole length of France—to Provence. It was a little journey that both enjoyed, but Mrs. Moir wrote to Martin: "If you had taken no holiday this year, in your application, I would have felt no pain. But when you were able to go with John to the south of France, and that not even to paint, as once before, but just on holiday, I feel pained. You could have holidayed so far north of Paris instead of so far south—taken your holiday on his return, come home with him, and seen your mother. As I say, the application to art would not have hurt me. You might prefer art to me. But to take a holiday and go the other way—*that* hurts your mother."

He did not know enough of women such as Mrs. Moir

to see in "You might prefer art to me" a possible explanation for these last years of acerbity. He took her letter to mean what it said directly. But as he knew not what to reply he adopted his mother's method of ignoring a part of a letter. It seemed a good plan; and in the next few letters that he wrote to her he avoided subjects that might be annoying. But when, some time later, he wrote to her asking if she knew to what place in France his Uncle John and Cousin Norah had gone, as he had destroyed a letter from them telling of an intended holiday there, she replied: "I fear you must treat my letters as carelessly as you treat your uncle's. You never replied to my query, in a letter I wrote some time ago, whether you were doing any work for publication—or applying yourself earnestly to learning lithography and etching. Also you ignored my remark that I was pained that you could go south the length of France and yet not come north so far. Your uncle is at the hôtel de Londres, Aix-les-Bains."

Bicker—bicker—bicker! There must be some cause, surely; some deep cause for it all!

When John came over again, a year later, to spend a week with Martin, he was more openly contemptuous regarding Mrs. Moir. He told of her "Afternoons" and "Duties," her "funny finds"—spiritualists, millenniumists, rescuers of fallen women, eugenists—with great amusement. Martin (observing that Mrs. Moir thought a deal of John) wondered, though without any jealousy (that was not one of his faults), if his mother would admire him more if he laughed at her too. But he could not laugh. He was never one who could ease himself by saying: "Oh, I laugh at them!" He was too sensitive. His brother told him of their mother's later development with great gusto. She opened her doors to parsons from far lands when conferences of

various kinds were held in Glasgow, drawing them together there. John thought it all very comical. A United Presbyterian minister had come to stay with them during a week of meetings—but on the third morning said he had been unexpectedly called home. "And he wasn't! I saw him in town next day. He was just bored by her talking religion to him when he wanted to play whist. Frightfully funny!"

"Did you tell mother?"

"Not likely! Why spoil her hobby? It would have been rough on the parson too! By Jove, she does fuss about *you* sometimes," he went on. "If anybody mentions a brilliant son, daughter, aunt, uncle, or forty-second cousin, she has out your reproduced stuff and gloats over them with it."

"Oh! She does like my stuff, then?"

"She talks about it enough if anybody puts on edge about having talent in *their* family."

It was beyond Martin. Was her attitude to him due to the fact that she had never forgiven him for his last words before he left home to follow his own life? Or was her attitude due to a primitive jealousy? Was she jealous of his interest in art? Yet, if she objected to his work really so much as she seemed to in her letters, how could she exhibit that work, proudly, for the eyes of others? The obvious explanation for that he utterly missed, and asked himself if, perhaps, she forgot he had grown up—and was moved to her attitude by a belief that praise should be withheld, as from a child, lest he be spoiled? That might be it! To John she was merely a ridiculous old mother, to be humoured slightly; to Martin she was the woman who had nursed him, held his hands when he had chicken-pox, waved him good-bye as he went to school—his mother, beloved. He had seen, when he was at home, that his father accepted her

"queerness" as inevitable. But he could not. Neither assuredly could he laugh at her, like John.

John continued to laugh. His letters, when they told of visits home from Bradford, were full of chuckles. Having few friends in Bradford he became more and more epistolary, and in his letters he seemed to give himself to Martin even more than when they met. He was not aiming at writing epistles to his brother that he hoped would be preserved to be published after his death; he was just conveying his news and opinions and chatter to Martin; thus, for example:

"——such a hell of a time I had last week. I was up in Glasgow for a few days, and put up with the old folks. I was in luck's way all right. The mater is going in for entertaining crazy cranks whole hog now, and having queer people come to the house. She clings on to The Purity Society, the Abolition of Barmaids League, The Rescue of Fallen Women Fellowship, and the Eugenist Kelvingsighed League—I mean Kelvinside. Miss Tanner is *it*! She has a dog now—one of these dogs clipped all round like a yew tree. It has damned unnatural habits. It is like these decadent poets I heard one of your pals telling about once when I was over. Why do women not train their dogs. What can you expect of a dog if you whisper to it: 'Oh, naughty dog —naughty Violet.' No—Violet is another dog. What a bunch of people! I pop up to the drawing-room to see them when I am home. I enjoy it. It's better than a music-hall turn. Miss Tanner kisses her pervert poodle, and raves against anything with trousers on—even against the deacons at her chapel! She says they can't even put up a prayer decently, and that they should call upon the women to pray. But I want to know what kind of man would put up a prayer in a chapel anyhow? And to what Deity would this bundle of screams put up a good prayer—better than the deacons? There is something wrong with that woman. Mrs. Harringway was right. She *does* look as if she were wondering whether she should take a cascara pill to-night. But

she looks also if she never took it. Did I ever tell you about the reformed barber? I can't remember if I did, so I must, even if you have heard of him before. He is a knock-out of a man. I met him in the hall going up to see the mater. His speel is that he used to have to take a couple of glasses of whisky every morning to steady his hand for shaving. But one morning, after a hot and rough night, he saw God and said to God: 'God, you must steady my hand this morning. I have finished with whisky.' I don't think I would be so familiar with the Deity if we met of a morning; I'd be for standing back and bowing low; but that's how he tells the story. By the way, would you have chanced a shave that morning, Martin, old man? Anyhow—I met him in the hall. 'You are studying art?' says he—'Oh no, that's my brother,' I said. 'He's in Paris.'—'Ah!' says he and shakes his head. 'And how does he employ his time?'—'When he's not at the art classes,' said I, just saying any old thing, first thing that came up, the way one does with these twopence-off-the-shilling people, 'I expect he's enjoying himself at the Salon.'—'Ah!!' says he. 'How this would break your dear mother's heart! Licensed vice prevails in France, I know—ah, the Salon,' says he. 'How shocking! How appalling! How sad! I shall pray for your brother that he may resist the lure of the flesh and stop going to the Salon.' My hat, Martin! He thinks the Salon is a bawdy-house!"

It was amusing to John—but the serious Martin could not laugh long. He gave but one explosion, and then sat thoughtful.

"Poor mother," he thought. "Could no one open her eyes to the ridiculous pathos of all this?"

But his brother saw it otherwise. Martin, reading on, came to this:

"There was a bunch of queer women in the house the other night—Miss Tanner of course, like a White Kafir; Sarah Lane (for whom the old lady still seems to be hunting a husband); Miss Barber (she's a skeleton and a pair of stays chiefly); then Miss Whitby. She's an

M.A. and has never got over it. A corpse, Martin, a corpse, china eyes, no chin—the kind of person nobody could eat soft foods opposite. She would turn the balance and put you off if you happened to look up and saw her between spoonfuls. The old man encountered them. It's impossible for him always to evade them, and Miss Tanner tackled him, same as once before. She got quite hysterical and screamed at him on a higher key, but he pursued his course of courtesy—like a mastiff with a little cheeky pug, and went into his den. 'You must excuse me,' said he, 'I have some things to attend to.' I went in after him. The cat was in his chair. He took the flat of his hand and sent it flying, and next minute says he: 'God damn it! There, I've hit the cat. Oh, John,' he says, 'shut the door—don't let the cat out.' I caught it up, and he took it in his hands and stroked it till it started to purr. Damn funny—eh, what? Wouldn't the Cattery Society have rejoiced to see him hit the cat?''

Apparently John saw something other than amusing in this incident; but he was not yet as serious as Martin in his outlook on the menage at Queensholme. It was still somewhat entertaining to him. To Martin, of course, there was the pathetic picture of six feet one inch of big, genuine, honest manufacturer enraged into hitting the cat, and feeling full of penitence. He had read the letter leaning in his window recess, and there he remained, letter in hand, looking out and seeing nothing of the Parisian court below, looking into his past and wondering if his mother had always been like that, and if his imaginings of the mother of old years were groundless fancies. Perhaps this affection that he still felt for her, the affection that made him sore over all these tales, and over all her rebuffs, was not really for her, after all, but for a fanciful picture that he called by her name.

CHAPTER V

THE receipt of a letter from his father suddenly recalled to Martin's mind how Wilson, years ago, on the first of his trouble with his people, had seemed astonished that he wrote to his mother (who had treated him ill, and continued to treat him ill), sending merely a message through her to Mr. Moir, instead of writing to the father —who had treated him ill, but suddenly, seeing himself, had recanted and been kind.

"I never see any of your work nowadays" (Mr. Moir wrote). "Your mother, I know, receives occasional magazines from you, and I am very glad to know from your letters that you are beginning to find openings while still a student. I have that first published cartoon on my room wall in the warehouse. Unless the magazines and journals you send come by a post that arrives when I am home, I miss them altogether. Please do not imagine that your mother is not interested in your work; but she imagines I have seen them when I have not, and puts them away."

Mr. Moir tried to make himself believe that this was an explanation. It is doubtful if he convinced himself, but thus, at any rate, did he write to Martin. He had recently seen a quotation taken from the book of some old philosopher: "What I do not allow to come within my consciousness does not exist for me." When he came first on that phrase he thought it idiotic; anon he came across it again, and thought it somehow grand; perhaps because he had reached a place in life when it could be of grand service to him—aid him in maintaining the attitude that he wished to maintain toward certain gathering vexations in his life. His quietest brother John, meeting him nowadays, found in him depths of philo-

sophic quiet undreamt before! No, he was not deluded. He had his private opinions, culled by observation and forced upon him, willy-nilly, by circumstance. He was not deluded—but he pursued peace.

This letter from his father gave Martin much thought.

"I should have been sending my stuff to the old man all along," he considered. He felt that he was still the same idiot that he had been on that day when he amazed Wilson. He treated his mother better than he treated his father—and certainly, apart from sentimental considerations, that was topsy-turvy of him. Idiot! Well, he had something by him now, in a magazine published that very day, that would please Mr. Moir. It was a drawing in *Flabbergast,* one of those journals to be found in Germany and France that care not whether their anecdotes and drawings be sacred or profane if only they are attractive in a certain bright way. Talent—if possible, genius—is what they seek; and many men who have come to honour in the art world made their debut in these pages. The tendency of *Flabbergast* is, naturally, to be rather more profane than sacred; some numbers, for all their brilliancy, are a trifle depressing by reason of their levity, are flippant rather than witty. Still, *Flabbergast* is awake.

Now Martin, after his last visit to Glasgow, had been much haunted by a memory of those iron works situated near Gushetfaulds—at the top of Crown Street. "Dixon's Blazes" they are called by the people—so called even by those who look upon themselves as better than lower middle-class—that is, those who have a touch of Love of Place in them. It is homely to call them "Dixon's Blazes." It gives a sense of *chez moi,* of belonging there, with all the people coming and going; though to be sure there are families in which it is a crime to say "Dixon's Blazes," just as it is a crime to have a maid-

servant not dressed in black! (No story can be written of our days and country that has not some hint of these tiny little things.) There had been a fog hanging over the South Side when Martin last saw these iron columns with the monstrous torches atop of them. He was coming townwards from Mount Florida by car instead of by train. What had been a haze at Mount Florida (a pallid haze, with sun struggling through and lighting it elusively) was a thick vapour in Govanhill, and a little farther on was sheer, undoubted fog. It was like pea-soup at Gushetfaulds. And high up in it was a radiance, a fanning and wavering of ruddy gold in the murky sky. This view of "Dixon's Blazes," after his return to Paris, he had put upon record boldly, with half a dozen colours; and, on the advice of his friends, sent it to *Flabbergast*. Then he went on with other work, expecting the drawing to come back. It did not. It was given a full page to itself.

The issue of *Flabbergast* containing "Dixon's Blazes" appeared, then, on the day that Martin received this letter from Mr. Moir, a later sentence of which said: "You might send me some of your things to Glassford Street. This would be better, so that I can show them to Caird. I shall take them home afterwards and hand them over to your mother."

"I shall send him *Flabbergast*," thought Martin, and took up the copy that lay on his table, to wrap it up for postage, when suddenly he observed that at the back of that "Dixon's Blazes" was a page of indelicate jests. Martin looked at them and felt doubtful. Mrs. Moir, he considered, had enough German to understand them. He did not go further, to consider that his mother had more than a smattering of German to aid her in seeing the giggling depravity. Happy thought! He tore the page out and pasted it on a mount, nicely spaced it with,

at the foot, about double the amount of margin that was above. Then he posted off his mounted "Dixon's Blazes" to Glassford Street.

It arrived safely, greatly pleased Mr. Moir, brought forth words of admiration from Caird, and was then carried home to Langside. All very well for us, looking on, to feel that Mr. Moir made a mistake. But he was doing his best. He had longed to see his son's work. He knew it was being withheld from him, and he wanted to see it without making fresh trouble with his wife. He thought he had gained his end without hurting anybody. And behold, Mrs. Moir was piqued that Martin had sent a drawing to the warehouse.

"He sent this to Glassford Street, did he?" she asked.

"Yes. I asked him to let me have some things to show to Caird."

"I would have got out some for you if you had asked me."

"I didn't want to bother you, dear. You mislay them, you forget where you put them—er, I thought it better. Do you like it?" he added hastily, to escape from the proximity of bickering.

She looked at it as if the paste used to mount it had an unpleasant odour which she had detected.

"Yes," she said.

"Not very hearty!" Mr. Moir muttered, which was unwise.

"What do you want me to say?" she asked, although his "Not very hearty!" had been so much of a mumble that, had she hankered after peace as greatly as he, she could easily have pretended not to have heard. He felt pained, comparing her attitude to the drawing with Caird's. And Caird was no sycophant. His admiration was genuine; his interest unfeigned. She took up the drawing as though to consider it again, and Mr. Moir,

leaving it with her, departed to write an acknowledgment to Martin. Presently he heard her step behind him.

"Ben!"

He turned in his chair where he sat at the desk in the corner.

"Yes?"

Her tone suggested that something terrible had befallen to be reported. Her face was grey; her lips were thin and pressed together like the lips of inquisitors. There was a fiery glint in her dark brown eyes.

"Ben," she repeated. "I thought it would be nice to frame that drawing Martin sent to you."

"He sent it to us both, my dear, to us both."

She let that go. She had her speech to unburden without distractions.

"I found a frame, not quite the right size, so I began to cut the mount. As I did so I loosened the drawing——" She held it out. "No wonder he pasted it down—to hide the other side. I will leave it with you to look at. I think you should write to him, telling him what you think of a Moir allowing his name and his work to be——"

"Give it to me!"

Mr. Moir held out his hand and took the page from his wife, glanced at the back, set the page on his desk, looked at her as if he could kill her, turned his chair about, and then came to a decision. Gradually it had been proved to him that this woman of his devotion could not be treated even as his equal. He had endowed her, through the years, with all manner of titles of superiority—and her many falls from the pinnacle had been, in his eyes, but signs that she was mortal, subject to whims and foibles like others. Yet only infatuation could now see her on any pinnacle. He did not know why her sweetness departed; he suspected it departed

before her sad attempts to be "earnest." But whatever the cause, she had dashed the idea of superiority years ago. She had, indeed, done more. She had proved the impossibility of equality. He would have liked to discuss this matter quietly with her, but she had no head for discussion. True, she could always say something, she always had "a reply," but only in the slang sense; what she said upon such occasions was usually so little of reply that her words merely implied failure to understand what was spoken to her. There was nothing for it but to treat her as inferior, humour her; therefore he throttled his annoyance and spoke quietly, with suavity.

"Very well, Rachel," said he. "Just leave it here for me to look at again."

She eyed him doubtfully. Intuition told her that this was a new side of Ebenezer. She tried to say: "I don't believe you are going to write. You are only foisting me off"; but suddenly she felt somewhat in awe of him.

"Now, just leave me to my correspondence, please," said he. She lingered a moment, staring before her with disquieting fiery eyes and mask-like expression, nervously fumbling thumb against forefinger. Then she went from the room; closed the door quietly.

He had begun to treat her as an inferior, but it hurt him to do so. This manner of keeping the peace seemed to him to have in it something dishonourable. He did not like it. After she had gone he delayed to take up his pen for some time; sat there heavily in his chair, thinking over his attitude to her—and her attitude to Martin.

"She didn't like that drawing coming to the ware'us'," he thought. "It seems extraordinary—and it is all so petty at bottom that I can't follow it. Woman's jealousy, perhaps. Yet I don't know! These friends of hers don't help her. My opinion is that they are all savages, and—whether they know it or not—their aim is to bring out

the savage in man. They don't want to be treated as equals." He looked back over his life and sighed; for he recalled the time when Rachel had been to him a rare noble woman, an inspiration. "I'm afraid her sense of honour is lacking," said he, and had a momentary self-condemnation, felt again that he was being dishonourable towards her by treating her thus, as she seemed to demand to be treated; by thinking of her thus—as she forced him to think of her. He took up "Dixon's Blazes" again. "What did she go prying into the back of it for, peering at the back of it for trouble? My God! It's bad! She never wanted to frame anything else—even hid things away that he sent home, said nothing about them. She didn't really forget where she had put them. Her mind is not going. What was she wanting to frame this one for? What's her idea? What's her motive?" He sat back so that his chair creaked. He addressed the wall: "She wasn't going to frame this. She was prying! She evil-eyed the thing! She did not look at it! Evil-eyed it! What's the matter with her?" He considered the years past, leaning back in his chair. "She hates Martin," said he, at last, as if he could not believe it, but wanted to say it aloud to test how the charge against her sounded. He nodded his head over the discovery. "Yes, we've got to face it. It's him she hates—as well as his profession. But she can't! It's absurd! She's his mother."

He noticed the pen in the inkpot and dragged himself back to his immediate correspondence. As he took up the pen another thought came to him; it came as he lifted the page of *Flabbergast* to put it beyond danger of ink-splashes. Heavy of countenance he looked at the brilliant-coloured study. His eyes puckered. He fingered his chin, twisted his mouth over a new explanation. There was a deal of red in the picture.

"She believes he is not colour-blind at all," thought he. "And instead of saying so she goes on like this. That's woman!"

But he knew very little of woman. Up he rose, opened his door, stepped forth into the hall, and: "Rachel!" he called. "Where are you?"

She did not answer, so he stepped across the hall and looked into the front sitting-room.

"Oh, there you are. I say, Rachel, is it because you doubt whether Martin is at all colour-blind that you set yourself against him? Is that the reason?"

"Set myself against him!" she cried. "What do—what do you mean?"

"I mean over this last drawing, this Dixon's——" suddenly he felt it all petty, too petty for speech, saw himself put in the position of a man who argues over a pin-prick.

"I can't understand how you think I am set against him," said she when he stopped. "I merely asked you to write and advise him, as a father should. It is clearly a very objectionable paper."

"His drawing is not objectionable," replied Mr. Moir.

"I did not say it was."

"No, no—quite so. But I mean—why this umbrage against him because of what is on the back—and never a word of 'Well done!' over what he did?"

"Oh, come now," she said. "I told you I liked it. I am very much hurt that you should think such a foolish thought as that I am set against him. I am his mother—thinking affectionately of his good."

Mr. Moir looked with puzzled eyes at his wife. Her expression, as she spoke, was not to him the expression of one moved by affection.

"Uh-hu! Uh-hu!" he grunted, and departed again to his den. All he had done, by returning thus to the

subject, was to let her know that he was having troubled thoughts. And she wished him to have troubled thoughts. She was punishing him—for what she knew best.

Mr. Moir went back to his correspondence feeling as greatly puzzled as before, feeling also that his wife had not been, as he would say, *frank* with him. He seemed to understand her less the longer he lived with her. But his sense of honour kept him from lying to her. When, a few days later, she said: "Did you write to Martin about working for that indecent journal?" he looked at her thoughtfully.

"I did not," he answered. "And I am not going to. That matter is settled."

She enjoyed this grim-spoken reply for a moment. The primitive in her relished the tone. He was her Man. The Thing under that big chest had silenced her, and she did not show pique at being so silenced; she enjoyed being spoken to thus. But Ebenezer did not enjoy speaking so. He felt a stab at his own heart, even while he spoke, hearing his own voice. She ceased to be friend, equal. These were not terms on which he was happy to remain with her.

But Mrs. Moir recovered of that domination, and felt strongly the impulse that was growing almost like a demoniacal possession; it had been nurtured in secret for so long. And one day, when her husband was at business, she wrote to Martin—a long letter with a charming beginning that made him read with thanksgiving avidity. Just at the end she told how she had seen the "Dixon's Blazes," and in her motherly interest in his work had looked for a frame to put it in, found one, but, she explained, it was too small, and so she had begun to cut the margin—which was at any rate too big at the bottom. She told how the print had come loose, and how, seeing the gross jests on the back, her

heart was pained that her son should make a living by working for such papers. And as Martin had not yet, like Mr. Moir, decided that his mother was not always well-meaning (if sometimes unwise) not really sweet and adorable (as she was still to him what a mother is to all sons with a capacity for reverence) that letter thrust him miserably from work for many days. It worried him, vexed him, haunted him. Foolishly, unable to dismiss the letter, he carried it in his pocket. There it reposed, where, every time he put his hand in, he touched it. There was something moody in his nature, as in his mother's.

A pity that Martin, seeing he could not laugh like John, did not destroy that epistle as a first step toward forgetting it. Instead he brooded upon it for days, and the upshot was that one afternoon, unable to work, and feeling too dismal to visit his friends in search of ease—lest, instead, he depress them—he must needs take out the letter and read again those last lines. And suddenly he went (as the American student of Méry's, Theodore Reynolds, would say) "off the handle," dashed the letter to the floor, and gave a cry, an agonised blasphemy—then suddenly sat down, holding his head. Something in his head seemed to give way at that incontinent shout. There came a rapping at his door, and his neighbour's voice, agitatedly, asked if anything was wrong. He opened the door and assured the solicitous neighbour that all was well.

"But I thought I heard you yell!"

"Must have been somebody in the Court," said Martin.

The neighbour eyed him doubtfully, and lured him out for a ramble. And Martin went, feeling it was advisable—feeling that he must be careful. Whatever it was that had happened inside his head, it must not happen again.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

It was in London (when he was twenty-six) instead of in Glasgow that Martin Moir, bone of contention, storm-centre—he knew not why—set up his easel, or, to be exact, his drawing-table. London was the place appointed because he received a commission to design a number of drawings for a book on that city. The publisher who commissioned had been keeping an eye on his work for some time, and wrote to him, care of one of the journals that published drawings from his pen. From his fifth-floor student's studio in the Court of Many Noises, Martin came to London, then, to "set up in practice," as young Theodore Reynolds, of New York, phrased it in his speech at the farewell supper. The payment for these drawings seemed altogether out of relation to the gush of the publisher, who clapped Martin on the shoulder, told him that he had a great future, that he was a genius, and further opened up his heart, expressing himself as one devoted to art; indeed it was only his devotion to art—and Martin's art—that had made him consider for so much as two seconds the publishing of such a book. He feared that it would he a dead failure financially. Only for art's sake was he willing to risk. But for art's sake he was eager to attempt the forlorn hope. For the merit of the work that he knew Martin would do and for the pride of producing, he was willing to lose money on the book—"and you must come and see my wife."

I am not God, to judge. I have my own opinion. But of course it is possible, just possible, that when clever men can be twiddled and diddled like that, moist-handed, shifty-eyed old gentlemen should go right ahead and diddle them.

And that was only a beginning of his experience of "business."

There was, anon, the case of Mr. Guile, of Guile & Co., the dealers. Martin had trusted him despite the constant evasion of his eyes, and an instinct that bade him beware. This gentleman sold, so he said, for five guineas, one of Martin's pastels. He took a fifteen per cent. commission, as arranged, upon that sale. Later on Martin was introduced to the owner of this pastel by a common friend, and quite accidentally, or casually, the price paid for it was mentioned.

"Twenty guineas!" cried Martin.

"I think so," said the owner. "Or was it twenty-five? I'll just verify it. Oh, you artists!"

He opened his desk and consulted a receipt file.

"Yes—twenty guineas," he said.

Martin merely nodded and changed the subject. Fifteen guineas and a fifteen per cent. commission upon five guineas had Guile made on this pastel—for which the artist received five guineas less the fifteen per cent. commission! He felt he could not confront Guile with this; also the artist's shame at being "bilked" aided to cover the commercial man's sharp practice. Still Martin Moir had his consolation. He told himself that this episode let him see that twenty guineas could be obtained for a pastel by him. Splendid! he was getting on!

Then there was an altogether charming publisher who asked him to design a cover for a certain publication. Martin did his best, posted the cover to him, and received a most gracious letter—not too flattering—not at all

condemnatory, but suggesting another theme. Martin tried again, spurred by working for one who could appreciate his work—the objection to the first study being not at all on the grounds of any artistic lack. This second he submitted. But the publisher had another "idea." He was intensely sorry that he had approached Martin before having come to a final decision as to what he wanted. Would Martin oblige him by making another? Martin did. It was accepted with great pleasure, and the cheque forwarded by return. Martin, moved by feelings of dislike to trouble one who had been so appreciative, by feelings of fear of giving offence, did not request the return of the first two designs. Some months later an art critic (one of the few in London who did himself make any marks on paper with a brush) congratulated him thus:

"I was down at our friend Diddle's place last week, and saw those two beautiful things he has of yours."

Upon inquiry, "those two beautiful things" were explained as the drawings which Martin didn't like to ask back again for fear of seeming—what was it?—mercenary, mean? (A ray of moonlight, as a French poet has said, seems to be in the brains of many of these artist people.) These two studies would help to decorate the publisher's house for the present; and later perhaps (for it is the dream of most artists that what has been filched from them will one day be esteemed highly even in the market-place) bring in a pocketful of guineas to the publisher's family. It was surely more than the optimist in Martin Moir that said: "Well, it shows what he thinks of them."

Then there was that dealer who took from Martin one day all that he had in his studio. He was to sell on commission. But week followed week, month followed month, and he sold nothing. On leaving Paris Martin

had asked his father not to continue sending him an allowance; he wanted to make his own way, he wanted to feel that he was self-supporting. Mr. Moir had replied that he appreciated the aim, but would only agree to stopping the allowance if Martin promised to send for monetary aid should he not "forge ahead" as quickly as he hoped to: "one must serve an apprenticeship," wrote Mr. Moir. Now when Barter (the dealer in question) did not sell, and still didn't sell, Martin began to worry. He paid a visit to the dealer, and diffidently told that quiet, nervous, shifty young gentleman of his position.

"We must have patience," said Barter. "One of these days you will sell. I have implicit faith."

"Are you perhaps asking too much?" said Martin. "For the present perhaps you might take the——"

"I must not depreciate your value," answered the dealer. "Still, I understand your position. I tell you what I will do. I will pay you down what money you would like just now."

"That is too good of you," said Martin, "when you have not sold. It is advancing——"

"Well, if you are a man of honourable scruples like that—and I admire you for your feeling," answered the dealer—"I will buy them from you. I will run the risk of selling some day. Of course," he added, "I cannot offer you nearly as much as I am asking for them."

"I quite understand that," said Martin. "This is really very good of you."

So he came by some money, and paid his bills, and was told, when he paid them, that it would be pleasant if everyone was as prompt! There the story seemed to end. To Martin's intelligence, there it ended; but Barter had a different vision.

To his studio in Chelsea (where he was not prohibited,

according to the terms of agreement, like Wilson in Glasgow, from sleeping) there came, one day, an old friend. The grey-haired proprietress of the lower front rooms of the house in which he worked and lived, opened his door, and putting her head round said: "Yes—you are there, Mr. Moir."

"Yes. What——"

"Somebody to see you," she said, and disappeared.

Next moment Mrs. Harringway advanced into the room.

"Oh! You!" he cried.

"I've found you at last!" she said. She looked hardly any older after the years: "Do you know how I found you, Martin? I've been to the people who published the London book. Your father gave me your address. I met him at an exhibition of etchings in Glasgow the other day. He gave me your address. But I lost it. And then I remembered the publisher's——"

His father had told her about the drawings! His father attended exhibitions of etchings! God bless him!

"You have a fine father, Martin, a fine father," she said, reading his expression rightly. "There is something pathetic in the way he has set himself to relish art. I understand it. I was so set against Reginald going in for art at first——" Martin stared at her, astonished. "I had a lesson one day—never mind how—and I made haste to appreciate Reginald before the art critics did. I was only just in time. It would have broken my heart if he had thought I only worshipped his success. Of course your mother—poor woman! Dear, dear! How absurd! As if Ebenezer Moir—Ebenezer Moir!—would ever have a mistress!" She sat down. "Ridiculous! Do you know the work of a woman called Jessie Ray?"

"Yes—I do," answered Martin.

"That's my opinion of it too," she said, smiling. "Rosa Bonheur goes pale beside Paul Potter——"

"Oh, it's not because she's a woman that I don't rave about her stuff," he replied. "In other arts women have——"

"Don't quote Sappho to me!" cried Mrs. Harringway. "It's her name and antiquity! Her manuscripts that remain are chiefly holes. It is absurd to cite her. It is a lot of worshipping men that have put her on a pedestal."

"I wasn't going to cite her," said Martin, laughing. "I was thinking of the biggest of them all. Christina Rossetti seems to me as big a poet as her brother, though she gave us less. You know that poem that ends: 'A King dwelt in Jerusalem'?"

"My dear Martin Moir, I'm not in a mood to listen to encomiums of women. I'm bored with women. We have some idiotic women in Glasgow—but London! Women have been so belauded by you men down the years that the inevitable has happened. The women who feel inclined are behaving just as over-praised children behave. They are getting very bad, and very cheeky, and more silly than ever. Christina Rossetti, did you say? Yes, of course I admire dear Tiny Rossetti—but I'm bored by these silly women. What a jolly place behind," she went on. "Some of these Chelsea houses are charming. What a fascinatingly gnarled old tree!"

She opened the rearward door wide and stood in the doorway looking out. He wanted to ask her what she meant by: "As if Ebenezer Moir would ever have a mistress!" But somehow he could not—delicacy, or ultra-delicacy, sensitiveness, or ultra-sensitiveness, as one sees it—prevented him.

"Have you heard of your mother recently?" she asked.

"Just a line or two. Father writes more."

"Your dear mother is growing religious. I do feel so sorry—I say such stupid things to people sometimes, and I'm afraid I hurt her last time I saw her. She had some other guests at the time, and I always feel nervous among strange people." Martin was astonished. She did not look as if she would be nervous anywhere. "And when I was leaving I said to a woman, who had been talking a lot about the decay of religion, and the revival of it—I was quite flustered, and she looked at me so strangely—I meant to say: 'Remember me to your brother when you see him,' and I said: 'Remember me to God.' Oh, Martin, I felt so stupid! Your dear mother seemed to think I did it intentionally, even though I explained it was a *lapsus linguæ*, through having heard so much, and so intimately, about God's views, don't you know? Oh, I say," she broke out, and walked to the mantelpiece, "there's that original, is it? Funny man! The note made for the block-maker is still in the corner! I'm glad you get back your originals."

It was the drawing of "Old Age and Rags" which Mrs. Moir had said was a mockery of age.

"What pity you have, Martin," said Mrs. Harringway, looking at it. "What pity." His mother's words—so different from these—came back to mind and stung him again. Mrs. Harringway puckered her ageing eyes at the drawing and murmured: "A man who has that sense of pity is denied, I suppose, the capacity to laugh at people who persecute him. He won't be able to dismiss idiots who laugh at him or his work. He will pity them instead. I am just getting old enough to understand these things now. A man who is civilised has a rough time among the semi-civilised. That's why we send our semi-civilised to fight savages. The civilised would be wiped out. The savage can be in awe of the semi-civilised; but while the civilised is being sorry for the savage,

the savage would be putting on the fire to roast him for the feast."

Having relieved herself of these phrases, she sat down to sip tea and nibble sandwiches and tell of her life now that her husband had retired. She was seeing the world, as she said, before she must leave it. Places she had read of she was now, at last, visiting: had been to Iceland and to Arizona; to Canada and Japan. "We couldn't afford it when we were young," she explained. "We've waited forty years for our real honeymoon trip—but we are having it now!—having these little trips before the long one. Oh, well, I hope I may enjoy the long one as well. Well! I must go." And she rose, agile, and dusted the bread-crumbs from her lap outside the back door, for the sooty sparrows.

Martin wanted to go all the way with her to her hotel at Charing Cross, but she would not hear of it. She fascinated him, this old lady with the wrinkles and the rings, the foolish speeches and the sweet ones, the attempts at cleverness and the natural simplicities. She would only allow him to convoy her to a 'bus, help her to find her way back, she said, to the Chelsea Town Hall. The sight of the Chenil Gallery gave her back her lost sense of latitude and longitude.

"Oh!" she cried. "I know where I am! I came down here once with Reginald to see some things by James Pryde in that Gallery over there. That was some time ago now. There were no picture *palaces* in King's Road then! Do you ever go to them?"

"Rather!"

She nodded and laughed.

"So do I!" she said, and bit her lip, gave her shoulders a quick little shrug and looked at the destination board on a motor-'bus that clattered to a standstill beside them. "This is mine."

"I think I must come with you," he said.

"No, no—go back and work. Good-bye—bless you!"

"What a mother to have!" thought Martin, watching her enter the 'bus—elderly, wrinkled, sparkling, with all her frill-fralls and her pink complexion, and interest in things that mattered.

Her 'bus sped on to Sloane Square, turned this way and that, rushed along the polished wooden ways, and at last came to a long halt while the driver took the bonnet off and stuck his head inside, and the car rattled and throbbed intermittently. To keep herself from growing nervous (London traffic always made Mrs. Harringway feel as if she had been drinking too much tea), she fell to studying the life upon the pavements. They had stopped beside a large hall, with bills on either side of the doorway. She puckered her eyes to read them, felt for her lorgnon, and was distracted suddenly from the placards by an advancing personage on the street.

"Now what's the matter!" she said. "Here's a Sikh coming along! Oh! And a little Armenian behind him! And—What can it be? Here comes something in purple and fine linen surely out of Persia!"

It was a "Congress of Nations"—or, in other words, it was one man representing a small society in a nation here, another representing another society in a nation there, another representing a society in a nation yonder—all come to the capital of the world to aid in the bringing about of world-wide fraternity. Mrs. Harringway read again the placards on either side of the door.

"This is the sort of thing Martin's mother would revel in," she considered. "Why! There she is!"

It was indeed Mrs. Moir, and with her was a little woman with high cheek-bones, fiery eyes, clenched fists, and a kind of hockey walk, talking vigorously as she strutted along, giving force to her talk by jabbing in

the air before her with clenched hand. Mrs. Harringway sat tight, throttled an inane inclination to jump out of the motor-'bus and hail Mrs. Moir. Why should she? She sat looking at Mrs. Moir and her companion as they walked to the hall—yes, they turned to the steps and began to mount.

"Oh yes—I have met that woman!" thought Mrs. Harringway. "That's the savage person, the church-attender and yah-hoo man-hater. Awful combination! A sweet old maid is very sweet. But a chapel-attending and window-smashing spinster is too harsh a blend of self-righteousness and intolerance! Better be off with the old love before they are on with the new hate! It makes them contradict themselves so much." She looked at Mrs. Moir's companion critically. "She has the bearing of a char-lady, though she has never charred!" she mused. "No—it is wrong. A char-lady's air of charring is right. A woman who has not charred and looks like a char-lady has something far wrong in her. I wonder if that too sensitive young man, who looked at me with such affection when he said good-bye (bless him), would pity *her*. Very likely he would!"

The motor-omnibus gave a series of half-leaps and went on again. The conductor came in chirping: "All fares, please."

"Ah well! I hope Martin does not know," she pondered. "She has not been to see him yet, and she has not told him she is coming to London, or he would have mentioned it when I asked if he heard much of her. It might drive a sensitive fellow like Martin to all sorts of Lethean indiscretions." She shuddered at the thought. "Mercenary depravity is bad, but sensitive depravity——!"

Yet her observations did not lead her to imagine, as she sat there thinking of Mrs. Moir, that that lady

would not call on Martin, even after the Race Question had been settled, though she had not called before.

"And how was Martin looking?" Mr. Moir asked when his wife returned to Glasgow. He had welcomed her warmly. Things had been going, he thought, quite comfortably, quite comfortably indeed of late.

Her face showed a kind of placid gloating.

"I did not see him," she said, and as she raised her head in replying, and her lips tightened, he recognised that that inexplicable acerbity of hers was again in the ascendency. There was a glint in her eyes such as is in the eyes of fanatics, a glint that would only harden before any logical and quiet discussion of its cause. "I was with Miss Tanner," she added, slow and deliberate, "and he does not like Miss Tanner." She had the air, having fired that off, of: "Now! Are you going to break out and rage at a Sinclair—and a woman?"

Evidently, while Mr. Moir thought things were "going quite comfortably," the old trouble had only been held in abeyance. Perhaps, really, what his wife had wished him to say when she announced that she was going to London with Miss Tanner was that she must not go—that Miss Tanner was an objectionable woman. But Mr. Moir did not domineer. He was utterly unlike the pictures of Man held up by Miss Tanner (and Miss Lane and Lady Sporran and all that ilk) as their *bête noire*. He did not break out. He did not say anything at all. He did not fight. He took the blow.

She had still to let Martin know that she had been in London. His father would not tell him. Never mind. She could wait for that revenge. Martin was to be punished for slighting her friends.

Alone in his den, Mr. Moir had many thoughts. They had to do with motherhood and fatherhood. He lacked self-righteousness, so did not think he had been a par-

ticularly worthy father. He wanted to be. He looked back with great regret on his early opposition to Martin's aims, and tried to gain ease by considering that that early opposition of his had been all for the boy's good. Once he saw he had been wrong he had tried to make amends. He had even hoped, when Martin went off to Paris, that it might be some time before the young man became self-supporting, so that he might still send him an allowance. To do so made him feel as if he atoned. "I did not see him. I was with Miss Tanner, and he does not like Miss Tanner." It echoed and echoed in his mind. He could hardly believe it. There was a malevolence, a vindictiveness in the speech that had made him feel that all protest was hopeless. Yes, there had been a malevolence against Martin's life all the time, he thought,—that's what it was, malevolence, on the part of the mother, from the first moment that the boy's aims were made clear. "I did not see him. I was with Miss Tanner, and he does not like Miss Tanner." This was very, very bad. He thought of going back to her and saying quietly: "Rachel, how do you think Martin would feel if he heard you had been in London and not gone to see him? Suppose he heard of it, what might be the effect on him? The boy cares for you still—as I do, God knows why!—and a thing of that kind would be enough to plunge even an unsensitive man into debauchery." Yes, he would go and say all that to her, quietly. She might listen to it. He rose. Then he sat down again. "No, never mind. He is away now. John is away. We are alone. I can stand it all. It is hardly likely that Martin will hear of it."

"I did not see him. I was with Miss Tanner, and he does not like Miss Tanner." The slow, even carefully enunciated phrase echoed again.

"By God! I will go and speak to her. It's a wonder

to me that Martin has not gone all to the devil already. She had a lesson before—over that model. No; I won't say anything. If I did speak to her so—suggest how she might plunge Martin into dissipation—she would only have some reply about the weakness of men. She would not see that if he did go to hell over it, it would be because he had affection for her. It's very dangerous, very dangerous. Huh! She a member of a society for the rescue of fallen women! One of her fallen women might make a consolation to that boy now and, as her Scripture says, stick a knife in his liver. No use talking to her. She doesn't understand anything. Ah God, ah God! She's just a woman!"

And yet he could not believe it. She must be ill; it must be due to some disease.

For months thereafter there was no word exchanged between husband and wife. Mrs. Moir had been in the habit of having breakfast brought up to her bedroom as often as not; but now she appeared at the breakfast-table every morning as though her constitution had received a fillip. Mr. Moir, however, did not flee the table. He propped his newspaper against the cruet-stand and behind that ate and drank. After a few such mornings Mrs. Moir took action. She (who eschewed condiments) rang the bell for the maid.

"Pepper," she said to the girl, whose mouth opened with astonishment. The girl carefully took the pepper-pot from the cruet-stand against which Mr. Moir's barrier of a newspaper leant, set it before her mistress with a manner suggesting horror, and retired with staring eyes. But Mr. Moir seemed entirely unaware of the incident.

His lunch he had always eaten in town; but his evening meal now he also ate at his club. Old members began to comment that Ben Moir "looked his years." Mrs.

Moir, giving battle, had failed to understand the silence into which he had retreated on hearing of the London visit. He could not speak to his wife; he feared to speak lest, speaking at all, he lost control of himself. She could conceive only of a sulky silence. She had almost forgotten the beginnings of their trouble. All that was clear in her mind, as she sat haughty at the board each morning, was that her husband refused her a word of speech.

At his club, when a group of members, one evening in the smoking-room, discussed what made Tragedy, one young man quoted Matthew Arnold's dictum regarding the subjects that are valueless. A painful situation, but one from which there is no outlet, said he, was useless.

"Ha, my lad," broke in Mr. Moir. "That is just the biggest kind of tragedy you can get!"

"Oh yes, in life—granted," the young man said hastily. "But such situations are useless for artistic representation."

"People wouldn't believe them, you mean?" asked the old man.

"Oh, people would believe them all right—but they would be too painful."

"I see—the idea is to have an end to your trouble, or else it's no good for artistic representation?"

"Quite."

Two of the older men, sitting by, looked thoughtfully at Mr Moir. The young man had been interested in the ethics of the discussion, and did not suspect what they did—some personal reason for Ebenezer's interest in this theme that was so much out of his usual scope.

For months, then, he and his wife were as strangers. The bills appeared on his desk and he wrote cheques for them. A servant disappeared, and a new one took her place. One day he saw a strange woman at the back of

the house when he had been out in the garden trying to admire a bed of crocuses, only to be made depressed by them, and to feel that spring is more sad than autumn.

"Are you wanting someone?" he asked, suddenly seeing her and thinking she stood at the door waiting for a response from within.

"Oh no, sir; I'm the cook," said she.

"Oh! Oh, quite so."

He wrote long letters to John, long letters apart from business. He wrote long letters to Martin—and clipped from the *Herald* and the *Evening News* all notices of picture exhibitions. When the *Evening News* produced its first "Thursday Literary Supplement" he posted a copy to Martin, observing that in the gossip column mention was made of artists and what they were about, as well as of writers and their work. Martin wrote his admiration, and said he thought it was the best evening paper in Britain, something for Glasgow to be proud of. Ebenezer Moir wanted to shake hands with his son for that. Martin might, for the present, be situate in London; but he had the love of his own city in him, evidently.

When, in a long letter, Martin said that he wanted, some day, to settle in Glasgow and begin upon a series of studies of the city, Mr. Moir wrote offering to defray expenses of board and lodging if it was only lack of capital in the bank that held him away from Glasgow and from that intended undertaking. Martin thanked him warmly for the offer, but answered that he was in no hurry. "I shall come north some day with a decent account in the bank—for a backing—so that I need not lay aside the Glasgow drawings I have in mind to do once I begin upon them. I am living here pretty quiet and Spartan for the sake of those Glasgow drawings that are to be."

"Fine! Fine!" said his father, reading the letter, and he looked so cheerful for days thereafter that Mrs. Moir felt she was not victor in this war (for war it was in her opinion) of silence. It irked her now. She desired to change the field to that of speech, so much did she feel defeated here. But until she could devise a plan by which to regain a sense of victory she turned again to the absent Martin.

She had not heard from him now for a long time; and, under this additional strain at home, she wrote to him to ask why he ignored her. It was a very sweet letter. In it, at least, there was neither sly thrusts at these things that she knew he esteemed, nor open and deliberate taunts. The epistle was wholly loving, and designed to draw from him a full and unprotected account of his doings. There was not in it even condemnation for having left her letterless so long. It was more of a purring letter, craving a few lines, than a letter railing against the long ignoring of her existence. She said nothing of having been to London. Altogether sweetly she wrote, and signed: "As always, your loving mother, Rachel Sinclair Moir."

Now Martin had abstained from writing to her for some time, abstained because he was working well; because he had never been working better; because, always, now, when he took pen in hand to write to his mother all his instincts were against it. He felt as an utter stranger to her. It seemed as if even in writing to her he laid himself open to her atrophying influence; she had so often sent him letters of dire influence. He was perfectly well aware that if his father had ever written to him as she had frequently written there would have been, long since, an end to all correspondence with him. Yet affection was hard to slay, and even still, while he felt that he had to protect himself from his

mother, he had affection for her. But now he stood in dread of her. They were so far apart that he knew not what to say; and he could not write fully and in friendly fashion, the while he tried to prepare himself to take, unmoved, her reply, if that reply was written in one of her grim moods. So he delayed and delayed, and told himself that he would reply to her when she wrote again. Her letter might give him something to say.

And now, when her letter arrived, he held it in his hand and did not open it. He looked at the writing on the envelope. It seemed to have menace in its regular, Italian slope, its faultlessness, rigidity. It seemed, indeed, written with a steel pen. And he was working as he had never worked before. There might be in this letter something to put him off his work, something to disorder his life. He feared to open it. He had to protect himself. Stabs from a foe are trivial, from a friend they are painful, from kindred they are terrible. Perhaps he was too sensitive—as John had told him, as Wilson, years ago, had told him—but, with a memory of former letters in his mind, he walked to his stove, opened the door, put the letter inside, set a match to it, and as it burned—"Woman," said he, "what have I to do with thee?" And he went on with his work.

The decision at last made, and taken, his work progressed so that he regretted the decision not at all, not even when, homing to his studio one Saturday night, he heard a group at a corner wrangling and a voice came forth from it: "Ah! But 'e sud remember his muvver is always 'is muvver"—and a chorus of voices, male and female, answered: "Yus, mate that's right." No—the decision he did not regret; but at chance reminders of his own "domestic trouble"—such as that of these voices overheard—he regretted the need for his decision. His mother, as she was, was so different from the mother

of his young days, the mother of the days before he gained individuality.

Two more letters in her hand, that arrived during the next three weeks, he treated similarly—and thus, as the first letter he had selected to ignore, after all these years, contained no words that her son could at all object to, Mrs. Moir was able to quote to herself from Shakespeare (under the misconception that it was from the Psalms): "Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." Thus was she able to wear the air of one cruelly treated by the son she had borne—indeed, it is highly probable that she did truly esteem herself so treated. There are two sides to every story; and who shall tell which is the true one?

CHAPTER II

But then, after all, it pleased Mrs. Moir to consider herself as a woman with a grievance. It was coming to be second nature to her to be sorry for herself—to seek, to make, or to imagine cause for self-pity when sufficient cause was lacking. "Most of us," said Mrs. Harringway once, "are monomaniacs—and not all of us, who are, are aware of our condition."

When, in about the fourth month of the silence between her and her husband, Sarah Lane (in whom she had been greatly interested for years, even paying her fees and giving her pocket-money while she studied ambulance work with a view, it was understood, to go forth as a medical missionary) told Mrs. Moir that she felt it her duty to stay at home, after all, as her family needed her, Mrs. Moir received a shock. It is doubtful if Miss Lane ever really intended to go forth bandaging and proselytising any peoples, whether of ebony or ivory, but she believed now that the intention had been real; for she too liked to feel baulked. "Duty" was a sacred word to Mrs. Moir, and she bore the disappointment bravely. But when a month later news came that Miss Lane, whom duty to her kindred had so recently restrained from going out to medical missionary work, had discarded her home duties to marry—and all this without a word to Mrs. Moir, without so much as a little cardboard box through the post, with an inch of wedding-cake in it—Mrs. Moir took to bed.

Her husband grew anxious, called in the doctor, sat by her bedside—and regretted him that he had been

hard toward her. She seemed so frail and pitiable a creature. Eventually she poured out her disappointment to him, and he consoled her—the more easily, though he did not mention that to her—because he was glad to know that the last had been seen of Sarah Lane. A hobby, a plain and ordinary hobby, was one thing; but quite another matter was a living hobby, standing on two legs, with dead eyes, a sagging, bagging bolster of a hobby—with placket hole always open, and its hand thrust therein (why should it not be? Men put their hands in their trouser pockets!)—a barren and sneering hobby, called a protegee, always at his wife's side, always being extolled for its erudition, always boring. *That* was carrying hobbying too far!

When Mrs. Moir confessed to Ebenezer that she did believe that she was only heart-broken by reason of disappointment in Sarah, he cheered her with alacrity. He thought to himself: "Poor woman!" He felt a great pity for her. She cried a little, and he felt that she was less vindictive than brain-lacking. It was only when she attempted to be "earnest" that she became so trying, did things that so seriously strained his devotion to her. The doctor talked kindly to her, wagged his head, had the air of dandling her, took a crooning note in his voice, said a change of air might do much good, advised a trip to the Riviera. To people with money, in such condition, he advised the Riviera; just as to people with less money he suggested little trips into the country, out to Eaglesham and up on to the high moors in the sun and wind—"do you as much good as the Riviera," he was wont to say to such patients, those of attenuated banking-accounts.

Mrs. Moir was not altogether a spoiled child beginning to show grey in her hair. She felt better now that her husband had ended the silence—the silence in which he

had seemed to be master. She did not want to go to the Riviera—though to be sure she would not object to a change of residence. The old house at Langside had been unpleasant to her, she admitted (when the doctor and husband were gentle to her), ever since the Infirmary was finished, and from the rearward windows of Queensholme it could be seen, inhabited. It made her miserable—a great barracks of bandages and ailments. She acknowledged that she would like a new home. So when Mr. Moir, after scouting in the suburbs for several days, without a word to her, so that he might give her "a pleasant surprise," saw a house which he thought might please, a pleasant house with lawns and gardens, on the way to Bearsden, beyond Maryhill, he carrried her thence for a day's drive, and asked how she liked it from the brougham. It charmed her; whereupon he suggested that they get the keys and look through it. The inside pleased her—and thither they removed.

Mrs. Moir now felt much happier. Her husband made no mention of Martin, who had been the cause of the Long Silence. But he did not treat her as if he bore any enmity. They had come back upon an easy footing without any thrashing out of the ethics of the incident that had severed them. He had given her no "piece of his mind" when he spoke again, thanks to her breakdown. One little doubt she had, however. How much did her husband and her son have in common? She had written thrice to Martin, and no replies had come. He was writing to his father—that she knew. It occurred to her that no letter had come to her since her London visit; though, to be sure, a letter had seemed due —and over-due—before that visit. But "over-due" was not the word for this lack of replying to her last letters. He was alive—and ignoring her. Perhaps he had heard that she had been in London without either advising him

of her coming or seeking him out. Someone who saw her might, perhaps, have told him. But would he believe what he might be told without verifying the allegation? Surely her son would never do that! Ah! But perhaps he had seen her!

Mr. Moir kept off the dangerous ground. It seemed that his ageing years were, after all, going to be none so bad. His wife was now again, as he would say, "decent." His sons were both a credit to him. Anon his wife would perhaps take still another step toward sweetness, and as well as being comfortable together they would be happy. It would "all blow over." Women have their frailties, and have to be treated tenderly. He had seen, in his lifetime, examples of spasmodic happiness in marriages. He had known of people happy in their courtship, bickering in middle life, happy again when their children had grown up and left them alone. He would have liked to be happy always; there was a feeling of emotion, silly emotion, unreasoning emotion, about such hot-and-cold alliances that aroused his disgust. Still—there was much to be thankful for. One thing he would not do. He would not interfere between his wife and their younger son. He would not ask Martin, in any letter, why he no longer wrote to his mother—nor advise him to do so. Nor would he discuss Martin with her. Time was a great pacifier. Bickerings were too much reminiscent of the lower animals. As life went—as marriages went—doubtless he had a great deal —yes, a great deal—to be thankful for.

While he was still in this condition of mind, he who had never known illness all his life, never taken any medicine beyond once, after a trip to the Continent when German foods had upset him, a glass of brandy and arrowroot (and that, too, prescribed by no doctor, but by a friend on 'Change), big, hale, hearty Ben Moir went

down with an attack of real and genuine influenza. And somewhat as he had forgiven his wife her sins when she took to bed of vexation, did she now, as he lay prone with influenza, feel that she would hate, to the day of her death, anyone who spoke slightingly of him. Such a new experience was it to see him lying in bed with burning eyes, parched lips, stubbly beard, that her heart was in a flutter all the while, seemed to be afloat in tears—and no sick man ever received his potions when he awakened so promptly as Ben Moir. "Let him sleep," was the doctor's chief advice, "let him sleep away the influenza." So Mrs. Moir ordered felt slippers for herself and for both housemaids—although it pained her ankles to wear heelless slippers.

The pain in her ankles, indeed, seemed to her as one proof of her devotion. And as he slept away the first days of the attack—the Real Thing, Influenza with a capital, a baleful and horrid influence, no mere chill bombastically misnomered—she thought over her life more deeply than was her wont, discovering for herself the springs of many of her actions that she had traced before no farther than the surface. Eventually, sitting in the little upstairs sitting-room, its door open so that she could hear if her husband moved, she fumbled away back on her path of life to the months preceding Martin's birth at Millport. At that milestone to which her memory returned she sat down to think now. There had come on the scene then, one Jessie Ray—and Miss Jessie Ray it was (even when Mrs. Moir did not admit it to herself) who was at the back of almost every skirmish in the Moir *ménage*.

CHAPTER III

JESSIE RAY was the young woman of Ebenezer Moir's calf-love, nothing more than that—the object of his early blend of passion and adoration. She was his quintessential woman when he first saw that women were adorable, heard the music of the spheres in the frou-frou of a frock. Jessie, a laughing, dancing-eyed maid, found the young adoring Ben amusing, and had not despised him. It flattered her to be courted so seriously, even if the wooer was droll; but when his attentions became too publicly serious (what had Ben to hide ever, or to be ashamed of?) she gave him to understand that he was a bore, and so, rather than bore the object of his adoration (so he explained the resignation to himself in these years, though perhaps, also, his pride was touched to the abatement of his ardour by her snub), he resigned from the croquet club where they met. Also he ceased to call for her brother to go out walking. As a matter of fact, the brother had always wearied Ben; but by taking a walk with that wearisome brother he managed to be asked home to supper, and so saw Jessie.

The amour died its natural death. When the Rays removed from Glasgow to Edinburgh it was already near an end. Their removal gave a last flicker of youthful anguish to his heart. He wrote to Jessie, begging her not to forget him. She replied that so far from forgetting her brother's friend, she would always remember him with a Christmas card. After all, he considered, he deserved this "brother's friend"; for he had made shameless use of that brother. That was the end of it

—when Ebenezer was twenty. Five years later he was grateful to Jessie for having forgotten her promise, for four years, to remember him with a Christmas card; for Rachel Sinclair, graceful, engaging, with thin lips, eyelids drooping at the outer corners, exquisite carriage, rippling laugh, had suddenly shown him that the Jessie Ray attachment had been merely what he now called calf-love.

Ebenezer awakened interest in Rachel. He had a certain distinction. He was a fine, big fellow. People spoke admiringly of his appearance. He awakened more than interest. He had a business in Glasgow, a small business that was likely to increase. Rachel found herself not averse to his attentions—and they were married. There were sometimes things he thought odd—from his point of view; but women are women, and he had, for wife, the best of them. A little girl was born, and Mrs. Moir was happy. It died, and she was sad. But it could not have been any sign of individuality in the little girl that interested her, for she found the next baby as delightful. That baby was John. It was after the advent of John that Jessie Ray—still Jessie Ray—drifted back out of the past.

Mrs. Moir noticed the air of "old friend," the very-good-old-friend air of the meeting. Jessie Ray had gone in for painting. She had exhibited in Edinburgh and Leeds; she made designs for children's books; she illustrated volumes of fairy tales. They met again in Glasgow, at a friend's house—an old friend who smilingly recalled the days of the croquet club, with bantering eyes if not with bantering speech. Mrs. Moir had to ask Ben all about Jessie when they returned home; and he told her all he could tell, smiling at the calf-love of the past. She had a furrow of pique in her brow over the story.

But when Jessie Ray turned up at Millport, some months later, Mrs. Moir was haughty. She did not feel at all pleased about this woman who sat on the grass above the beach, sketch-book on knee, sketching the children at their donkey rides, the children building sand-castles, the children wading. She was very petulant, had many searching questions to put to her husband —searching questions regarding Ebenezer Moir's feelings toward Jessie in the past. Such questions are always rather invidious and perhaps the more unpleasant the more deeply the catechised one cares for the catechiser. Mr. Moir told himself that all this questioning was due to his wife's condition. But when she went the length of suggesting that he knew Jessie Ray was coming to Millport, and had kept the fact from her, he clung tenaciously to the explanation, as gently as he could, that not only did he not know, but that even if he had known he might well have forgotten to mention it—for it could mean nothing to him.

But Mrs. Moir was determined; and at that she must needs tell herself that her husband did protest too much. He, on his side, lavished more than his wonted attention on her, believing that her condition made her thus cranky and increasingly suspicious. Years after, when she came into the religious epoch, she was wont to say (talking of the serious calling of motherhood) that she had prayed unceasingly that the child about to be born might be stillborn unless it was to live for the glory of God, and doubtless she really thought then that that was what she had prayed; for she was a very ordinary woman. What she did actually think at the time was little else than that she hated the child because of Jessie Ray. Her husband was in love with Jessie—she saw it in his eyes when they met; she was sure of it by his very denials.

If only the thought of humouring his wife had occurred to Ebenezer Moir earlier in life, thus early indeed, he might have considered it advisable to invent for her a little speech in response to her ceaseless questions—after the style of: "Do you care for that woman still?" or "Tell me, you do just a little care for Jessie Ray?" He might have considered the advisability of affirming that he did have a lingering affection for Jessie, but was determined by the grace of God, or what not, to crush it for his wife's dear sake! She was a woman who, taking what some call an "idea" into her head, stuck to it. Her "ideas" were burrs with the most tenacious spikes. She seemed of a texture particularly prone to burrs. But as Ebenezer Moir had evolved no "ideas," on his side, of how "to deal with women," as he imagined himself allied to a comrade merely suffering from a passing and wholly natural spleen, he did not humour her with any such speech. He simply bore her accusation, denied her allegations—and told himself upon each occasion, that they came of her condition. But Jessie Ray was to be a cat-fish in his sea.

The child arrived—was dutifully cared for, sometimes even more than dutifully. For sometimes it broke down, by the unwitting charm of childish ways, that air of holding at a distance with which the mother-love offered to it was misted over. The child was both strong and delicate, like a watch. But as it grew beyond the years of infancy, and of childhood, and began to have likes and dislikes, keen observers might have noted that Mrs. Moir seemed to put great store on "the duties of motherhood."

Her big, non-introspective husband did not inquire deeply into her dislike for Millport. He could not forget her attitude there at the time of Martin's birth, but he clung to his belief that it was due to foible only and he

did not connect her dislike for Millport in the following years with the "foible." She, alas, found in his hankering after Millport only fresh sign of his amour, the amour he denied. It was, she thought, association of ideas that made him always to go to Millport. This fancy took all the deeper hold because she did not again charge him. Secretly she had her opinion, openly she seemed merely to have a causeless dislike for the place. But she succeeded in making Millport miserable, and eventually their summer residence in that island watering-place was sold. Let no one think that Rachel believed her husband had been unfaithful to her. What she did believe was that he had a certain tender leaning toward that woman Jessie Ray, and that he would not confess it to her, would not acknowledge it. To discover these subtleties in his wife's mind was beyond Ebenezer Moir's capacity. Had anyone suggested them to him he would have had a brushing and dismissing gesture of his hand, an "Oh, rubbish!" and a great laugh at all hallucinations of petty minds. But even in her most affectionate moments Mrs. Moir was never a prey to the belief that sometimes comes to a lover—that she has married a man far too good for her! Her great sense of was she called "dignity" prevented—in the early periods of this green-eyed folly—any public appearance of discord. Yet all along, when anything went wrong, anything that set Mrs. Moir a-brooding, she invariably was brought up, at end of her brooding, face to face with an effigy of Jessie Ray. Her son, Martin, as we have seen, had some of this kink in him. When matters went wrong with him and he damned and stormed up and down his studio, almost always he had the thought at the back of his mind that his mother was responsible. She had so often tried to baulk him that when others baulked him

his irked mind went back to her as the queen of all baulking.

Jessie Ray had disappeared again as comet-like as she had come, and Mrs. Moir (pondering the fact now, at Bearsden, while her husband lay ill) did not think that Ebenezer corresponded with her. There were limits to her imaginings. She had "faith" in Ebenezer. She was blessed with a good husband, she thought. It was Martin that was her main cause of regret. She thought of him often—of how he had run away from home, of how he had helped (she had seen it herself) in the downfall of some poor girl. She had tried to do a mother's duty—to teach him to honour his parents, to teach him to be courteous to women; but he had not been so. For that outbreak on the night that he left Queensholme she would never forgive him. She recalled how Mr. Moir had spoken to her on his return from visiting Martin, after she (feeling it her duty) had told him of the company in which she had seen the boy. Mr. Moir had gone to his den and sat there till she could bear the suspense no longer. She had gone to him, and at her entrance he had wheeled heavily, fixed a sullen gaze on her, and said: "Rachel, I have a question to ask you. Did Martin write a letter after he left here—as well as sending the telegram?"

"He did, but I was too saddened to speak of it," she had answered. "My heart was broken over it all."

Her husband had looked at her as never before had he looked, and then had said: "All right. Leave me alone." And she had heard no more of it till the evening. He had taken supper in town, with Martin, she believed, and had arrived home late. Some of her friends had been in the drawing-room, she remembered; he had not come up, and after they were gone she had sought him out in his little smoking-room, feeling the

atmosphere for indication of his humour, and finding him in unconversational key, had talked to him about her visitors and their affairs, when suddenly he had broken in with: "Rachel—you and I should thank God we have not driven that boy to hell!" He had said more than that—coarse and direct. "If he plunged into debauchery and died of delirium tremens in a brothel it would be on your conscience and mine. As it is, he has all my sympathy."

"You have ordered him to come home, I suppose?" she had asked.

"I have advised him to stay away," he had replied.

That had been the end of it, and for a long while —years in fact—she had found it difficult to forget the look he gave her; but now—well, all men defend one another, thought she; Ebenezer was very much a man; but he was not a bad man; nay, he was one of the best of men.

Her mind reverted again to Martin. After all (thus was she able seriously to tell herself) she had helped him. She had even been interested in his interests. If it had irritated her to see him drawing she had nevertheless given in to his interests often. She had, for example, taken him once to see a large picture that toured through Britain, a picture painted by a Christian artist, as the placards said, a picture of the Prodigal Son—"Where is my Wandering Boy To-night?" The admission was one shilling each; they had sat on plush seats, and an attendant had handed them little opera glasses, through which they had looked at the painting, while a very pleasant man stood at the side of the frame with a pointer, drawing their attention to how one could see, faintly in the clouds—"if you will level your glasses to this corner"—an indication of the grieving parents at home. "In the left-hand corner you will see

a hill. It represents the Hill of Calvary. The artist went to the Holy Land specially to paint this wonderful background. Of the acorns—if you will please level your glasses to the near foreground—of the acorns at the feet of the broken Prodigal, I need only say that they are like the cherries in a famous picture which were pecked at, so the legend says, by a blackbird. These acorns might deceive the wood-pigeon."

She remembered how all the thanks Martin had given her was to say he did not believe a blackbird ever pecked at cherries in a picture.

Also she had taken the boy to see a wonderful painting with two hundred and twenty-seven figures in it, as the man who went round with it told them—a picture that was not only a picture, but was educative as well, showing the Jubilee celebrations at Westminster Abbey. Her eyes could quite easily go moist remembering that day, and the child at her side. Ah yes! She had been a good mother! The rays of light coming through the Abbey windows were also educative. The man who pointed out things in that picture had drawn their attention to the fact that whereas sunlight passing through coloured glass casts the glass's colour upon the floor where it strikes, moonlight does not, and he had quoted some lines of Keats's, in which that poet makes the moonlight cast the colour of the glass through which it pours. Martin had been very ill-tempered, much annoyed at this. "What right has he," he asked, "to bring in Keats just to condemn him?"

Mrs. Moir had been rather glad of this correction of Keats by the man in the frock-coat, for she wanted Martin to read serious works such as Carlyle's *Heroes*. Carlyle, he said, was the man who called Keats's work "sugared nonsense!" or something like that. She had done her best for him. But how different John had been! Martin

was deep; he hid himself from his mother—he had never been frank with her. She doubted very much if there was anything at all wrong with his eyes. If there was not, then it showed great cunning in him that he had persisted with such an air of truth, even under Professor Earle's eyes, in not only saying he could not see difference between dark pink and light blue, but in arranging the colours the way he had arranged them on the oculist's table.

But why keep on with all the pros and cons of her aversion to Martin, her obstinate objection to him? Here are reasons or attempts at reasons, and her aversion was unreasoning. And there is one word more: the facial likeness of Martin to Jessie Ray, a likeness for which eugenists may have an explanation, a likeness horribly evident to Mrs. Moir, as the boy grew into the youth, had been a thing she drew no one's attention to, hoped none might remark, but found embittering beyond words.

CHAPTER IV

It was to a changed Glasgow, a broadened Glasgow, a stretching Glasgow, that Martin Moir returned to make true that dream of his—the name of which was to be "Clyde Etchings." He left London feeling kindly disposed toward the world. His dealer (who continued to swindle him, and explain away the swindling in the ancient way) came to see him off in the most amicable and ingratiating fashion, and to say to him: "Happy man! I look forward to the day when I can leave my shop for six months to a year of holiday!"—for that was the time Martin had said he would be gone. Full of friendliness, his dream drawing nearer to reality, he had thought: "Why of course! Poor fellow! He *is* kept close." It was only after the train started that it occurred to him that the answer was: "I am going away to work for six months as hard as ever before." But Barter was waving good-bye, and saying, "Don't forget me when you have more stuff. I don't mind losing on you."

Could higher praise come from any dealer's lips? It was an example of quixotry to put Martin to shame. He almost decided on the spot to make Barter his sole agent. When dealers spoke that way how could the artist ever be mercenary? But the train carried him away and he did not commit himself—which was as well. For had he promised he would have fulfilled—and all dealers are not equally roguish. Fate might bring him into the hands of one with more alloy of honour. But this is our observation, looking on; and Martin's

smile upon England, that rushed past the windows, had no hint of cynicism.

Eight hours later he came out from Queen Street Station, looked down into George Square. All along the south side of the square, as if there was a string there on which some big child flicked coloured beads—yellow, red, green—electric cars rushed, buzzing and clanging. The cars were lit up, so were the street lamps, but a remnant of day still elusively lurked in the streets and was observed on the point of vanishing. In the vista of Queen Street it was subtly faint; but in the open square it was more clearly evident, suggesting the last lines of "Lycidas"—Day twitched his mantle to depart; one caught the last trailing of it. A high window, fronting the west, showed a reflection of the ultimate glow of sunset that might have been taken for interior illumination at a cursory glance, only that it had a surface sheen, a smoky blending of purple and gold.

He stepped back to the Station Hotel after his baggage, which he had told a porter to take thither, engaged a room for the night and went forth again. It was the same old Glasgow. The *Genius Loci* that had called him to the corner of the square beyond the hotel door was unchanged. He seemed to go hand in hand with a spirit, the spirit of the city, down to his father's club to ask if the old man were there. He scarce expected that he would be, as he had received a letter from Mr. Moir only a few days ago telling of an intended run down to Bradford, and a residence there of some days. He passed along St. Vincent Street. MacLehose's was closed, but the brass plate twinkled as of old to the street lamp, and was lit up, blazed bright, hazed again with the radiance summarily cast upon it and withdrawn by passing cars. A haberdasher's across the way was open, and showed a softly brilliant window, a fine ar-

rangement of shirts, scarves and socks. The florist's at the corner was like an old shrine revisited. Its window had always fascinated him—with the banked flowers, in some seasons ecstatically splendid. He remembered pausing once with Wilson to look at a display, and how Wilson murmured:

> "Give me a golden pen, and let me lean
> On heaped-up flowers. . . ."

Of his own special, intimate part of the window he "said nothing to nobody." There were always wreaths hanging there—probably funeral, but to Martin wreaths of victory—made of leaves like bronze, some of them; others of copper. They used to cheer him when his mother, whom before all people he wished would love his work, evil-eyed, or even ignored it. They reminded him of the leaves around Shelley's head in Onslow Ford's memorial. They seemed to hang up in that window beautifully counselling: "Do your best."

Lorries rattled over the cobbles in West Nile Street with the same tearing scream as of yore; newsboys shouted; clerks hurried in from the suburbs to extension classes, or to billiards. He turned back along Gordon Street. The newspaper shop in the flagged way leading from Buchanan Street to Queen Street still showed the illustrated weeklies on strings in its window. So did the stationer's shop farther on, on the north side of the Royal Exchange, whither he walked—just to see. That suggested the "Papeleria," and he must needs go down to St. Enoch Square—to discover if it still existed. There was a slight change there; one entered it on the street level now instead of going down steps to it, and Deadwood Dick and Jack Harkaway and Ching Ching had disappeared. The newcomers might appeal to the youth of to-day—Martin could not say, no longer a youth of

the day. Perhaps he could not read even Jack Harkaway now. He strolled on through the square. The bird-shop, beyond Spite's, in whose windows black-and-white fan-tails used to strut, was gone now. In Howard Street was still a fishmonger's with a tank of glass in the window. He had seen a shark hanging up in it once. To-night the special "draw" was a Deep-Sea Thing, of which he did not know the name—a shuddery, amazing thing, with a nose yards long.

"Watty Wilson" seemed to have been creeping up Jamaica Street to some purpose, taking in shop after shop, at his old stretching game. There seemed little else but "Watty Wilson" in Jamaica Street. At the Broomielaw Corner a piper strutted and Gaelic-speaking people gathered as of yore. He loafed slowly past and heard the gutturals of the Hebrides, and imagined Skye and the Coolins going out like a dwindling pyre under the West Highland sunset. Then home to bed, tired and happy—and strangely sad.

The greatest shock of change that he received was, next day, in Sauchiehall Street. Where were the pictures of the city? He inquired anxiously, and was proudly told of the new galleries in Kelvingrove Park, and hurried thither, and seeing the stone Saint Mungo blessing those who entered, saluted him, for Glasgow's sake—and as nobody was looking. Wandering here, wandering there, he acclimatised himself to the city. He found a big quiet studio to let away up among the roofs and leads (not far from George Square), a studio, he was told by the landlord's agent, that had been inhabited by "some very well-known artists, sir." He was doubtful of the authenticity of the long list of Big Men who had painted there, and looked his doubt at the clerk. The fellow was clearly cut out for his business—and should have graduated out of it (by this time) into the ranks

of imaginative story-writers. "*And* Lockhart," he said, "who painted the Jubilee picture for our late Queen," had inhabited it.

"He did a dam sight better than the picture for the Queen," said Martin, more to the counter than to the clerk, for the list that had preceded Lockhart showed a knowledge of famous artists, and a capacity for using them that interested him. The comment about Lockhart was subconscious. "No—I would rather not paint in a studio in which a poor man was hag-ridden by a royal command," he said, looking up suddenly. "Have you any studios on your books in which artists painted drunk navvies?"

"Just let me verify," said the young man; "I may be wrong." And he dived into an inner room to make sure, returning to say that he had made a mistake, that Lockhart had painted next door. Martin had really no despite for Lockhart, but he gave verdict, still with his wonted sad expression: "Too close! I should feel overawed by the ghost next door."

"Er—ah—well, I'm not *quite* sure. I asked, but——"

A man whose nose had only been visible at the inner door, now came into view and said: "No, I find that Mr. Lockhart was never in that building."

This was the sort of queer thing that Martin usually found as soon as he came in touch with business men.

"I don't believe Lockhart was ever within miles of the place," he cried, breaking out into a laugh. "But I tell you what—if you knock off the rent by a quarter you can tell the man who follows me that I was there. Now that is an attraction——" Next moment he hoped they wouldn't think he spoke seriously.

"We may be dead then and not reap," replied the agent, also laughing. "However, I can do that for you. Would you care to sign the agreement now?"

"Yes—and don't put in any clauses that you know are likely to be kicked over by me, because I assure you I shall kick."

Laughing, the agent drew up his agreement, asked for references.

"Dear God!" sighed Martin. "They manage these things better in the Court of Many Noises in Paris. And in Chelsea all they ask is rent in advance——"

"So do we."

"Yes, but you ask so much more—and it hurts me! Will you give me references from former tenants to say how well you treated them when the pipes burst, or the ceiling peeled, or the washers gave out?"

They smiled at each other.

"Oh, it's only a formality, Mr. Moir."

Martin took out his cheque-book and filled in a cheque which he handed over the counter.

"There," he said, "is a year's rent in advance."

"But why pay a year in advance!" ejaculated the agent.

"Because I shall feel free and happy knowing I am so far ahead," said Martin.

"But it only means that we are gaining interest in the bank when you might be!"

This was better!

"That is very good of you," Martin answered. "But I've a lot to do—a year's work—and to go into a place with the rent paid for a year is almost as good as earning it."

So he came, on pleasant terms with the landlord's agent (or factor, as he is usually called in Glasgow), to the big studio in the core of the city, with the view of roofs and sky. He had in his heart the kind of lilt that a happily married man must feel on coming home to his wife; or a faint suggestion of the joy that perhaps, or

perhaps not, awaits us Hereafter, going back Somewhere again and recalling it all—forgotten in the interim, with the worry of mundane affairs, bills and influenza, and physical relations blurring the spiritual, and what not. He saw, he observed, as never had he seen and observed before. A subdued ecstasy was with him always, sketching in little courts around the Trongate, sketching groups in the Glasgow Green, revisiting Springfield Quay, and standing on the edge of the wharf peering at the Spanish sailors playing "knifey" on the deck, crossing and re-crossing the Govan Ferry so as to have a view from the river of the busy river-fronts there.

He visited Wilson—and just in time. Had he delayed many more days he would have had to go without seeing him for months, for Wilson had at last made some money —after long years—and was going abroad to spend it. Wilson's fanlight was open. Wilson was clearly at home. His voice could be heard, raised, as Martin came along the corridor: "What do you say? Do I know a book of Henley's illustrated by Nicholson? No, I do not!" His voice mounted up from "No" to "not" in a very determined tone. "I know an album of drawings by Nicholson to which Henley vamped an accompaniment of rhymes. You dam literary men!"

"Oh, I *beg* your pardon," came another voice. "What is the form of words? You stop me, please, if I do not have them right. Do you know an album of drawings, then, by Nicholson to which one Henley——"

Martin rang the bell. Wilson opened and hailed him with a "Well!" and held out his hand. Behind him was a cadaverous young man with a lock of hair over his right eye, a very long nose that would have been almost fantastically long had he not balanced it by a small cropped moustache. He looked the kind of person who might write a book about them all some day.

After an hour of talk and of looking at Wilson's work, Martin returned to his own studio to examine letters that had been arriving for him, forwarded from London. One of them was a request that he would read a proof, enclosed, of a serial story, and see if he would care to take up the illustrating of it. At first he felt inclined to reply in the negative. But the price offered for three or four illustrations monthly was pleasing. It would keep him comfortably, and if he did not allow himself to be led into other work he would still have ample time for his Clyde etchings. He had already learnt to limit his expenses for the sake of this dream that he had so deeply at heart. He began to read the proof of the story—and was interrupted by a ring at the bell. He put down the proofs and advanced to the door, fumbling from his pocket the gratuity to give the man who, doubtless having painted his name on the board at the foot of the stairs, had now come up to say the job was executed. He opened the door, and there on the landing stood a girl.

"Are you Mr. Moir?" she inquired.

"I am," he answered, and holding the door wide, drew back the inner curtains on their rod.

She had looked at him very directly when he opened, and now, as she stepped in: "You don't know me," said she. "But my brother—Francis Alexander——"

"Oh, you are Alexander's sister? Do sit down, please," and he indicated a chair. "I liked your brother immensely," he said. "I was awfully sorry——" Before he left Paris he had heard from Wilson of Alexander's sudden death.

"He often spoke of you," she said, and there was a few seconds' silence. But they could not sit tongue-tied like this.

"Will you have some tea?" suggested Martin, and

before the girl could reply he was off into his studio, and was getting tea ready. He was everlastingly drinking tea. His mother had been addicted to tea to such an extent that doctors had besought her to desist—perhaps he inherited his tea-drinking. Eugenists may have an opinion. With Martin, when things went well he sipped tea; when things went ill—he quaffed tea.

"Will you have Indian, China or Russian?" he asked, coming back into the sitting-room.

"Whatever you are having," she said. He thought she looked slightly woebegone; or, at least, he thought that he surprised a woebegone expression that was obliterated when she spoke.

"China is the least nervy," he said. "But it has to be taken as they take it in China." He disappeared, and re-entered with tea and macaroon biscuits. "I have only macaroon biscuits," he went on. "I hope you like them."

"I do, very much."

"They always remind me of Sterne's donkey," he said.

"And me too," she said. "I thought of it when you spoke." She sat looking thoughtfully at her cup, and then: "I have really come up to see you rather urgently," she got out at last. "I saw a man——"

There was a ring at the bell.

"Excuse me." It was the sign-painter to say he had painted the name—"and would you care to step down and see if you are satisfied?"

"That will be all right," said Martin, and gave him sixpence for himself. In the sign-painting business, of course, one can no more make hard-and-fast rules than in any other, but a man in a studio usually tips a sixpence where a man in an office tips threepence.

"I am sorry to interrupt you," said Martin, returning.

She nodded. "I was just saying that I saw the man painting—he had got the length of M-A-R-T- but the rest was in chalk. I don't quite know why I felt I had to come close to see what it was. It was subconscious, perhaps. When I saw your name I came up at once—because I want your advice, Mr. Moir. Francis used to talk so much about you." Then, after a pause, with a forced note in her voice she said: "I am hard up—I simply must do something. I thought I would ask your advice on being a model."

"This is jolly hard luck," said he. "Have some more tea. Have some more biscuits. I thought you were *well fixed,* as Americans say."

"We were."

"But why go in for model work?"

"My brother used to draw me all the time. I can stay steady."

Martin smiled. Since the girl had entered, each movement had been a challenge to his pencil. If she merely moved about instead of "staying steady" he would have inspiration and model for a hundred studies. He looked at his table and saw the proofs of the serial story that the editor in London wanted him to illustrate. On the mantel-piece of this ante-room there was an original of Frank Craig, and two pen-and-inks by Glackens. Martin felt, as had Caird years ago, in Glassford Street, that illustrating was an art.

He took up the proofs of the serial story and handed it to her.

"Would you mind reading the beginning of that?" he said.

She took the proofs, not understanding, thinking him a little odd—but reminiscent of her brother too; unusual in manner, but not surprising. Perhaps (thought she) he wanted to think on her behalf with concentration,

uninterrupted, while she abstracted herself in a story. As she read he stared at his toes, then looked up at her, and would fain have sat down to his table on the instant to sketch in that pose. She sat on the sumptuous divan (that some former inhabitant had set round two walls) proofs in hand, bent over them. Her dress fanned slightly round her. The picture had something of the charm of the columbines in a series of fascinating studies of *The Italian Comedy,* made by Frederick Carter—that Martin had seen in London, at the Baillie Gallery, shortly before his departure northwards. The pose was perfect, the cant forward of the body; there was something stately in that fanning of the dress—out of another age it seemed, giving an other-worldly touch to the arrangement. He looked at her face, and there dawned on him the thought that perhaps things were very bad with her. She had a sad, or faintly sad expression, he thought. Probably she hid much. He had a touch of anxiety on her behalf. Perhaps she was hungry! She was hungry, maybe, beyond macaroons! He slipped out to the stairs, leaving the door ajar, and rushed off in search of the caretaker, thrust a shilling into his hand—tip in advance—begging him to go at once and bring up a lunch for two from the nearest restaurant.

"I'd better get the menu-card first, sir."

"No, no—you just bring up whatever soup they have, and two plates. And also—they always have cutlets—cutlets and peas."

"If peas are off?"

"Spinach—cauliflower—anything. Potatoes."

He returned to the studio; Alexander's sister glanced up at his arrival.

"It's quite *clever* stuff," she said, and looked puzzled at him. The books he had in his two bookcases—one on

either side of the fireplace—did not suggest that he would read much of this sort of thing for his own amusement, good though it was in its way. "The sentiment is—er——" she hesitated. Evidently she would rather praise than reproach. "It has some pictures—good pictures."

He looked at her as she talked—looked at her in a way that reminded her quite painfully, though making her feel at ease, at home, of Francis.

"You asked about models," said Martin, and leant against his mantel-piece. "May I smoke?" Despite his protest (of years ago, however) regarding models, he did not at all relish the thought of this young woman going into the model profession.

"Why, surely!" she replied.

He filled his pipe. "Oh—I beg your pardon. I have some cigarettes somewhere. Perhaps you——"

"No, thank you—I don't."

He looked pleased, she thought, and neither objected that he should take upon himself to have an opinion, nor was charmed.

"Well, you asked about models," he said. "Now—I don't know if you know a lot about it, but——"

"I know nothing at all," she put in eagerly, awaiting the advice of one who had been her brother's friend—a much-talked-of friend.

"There are men who have just one or two models—that suit them—that is for their illustrating work, apart from portraits. Now, of course, you only came up to ask me for hints about it. But if you would do me the honour—if you would consent to pose for me—I should think myself happy. I don't know—let me see——"

"I never—I had really no idea of that when I came up——"

Why! Her eyes were full of tears—no, they were dry

again. She was hungry, he was sure that was what was wrong. Her plight was as bad as that. He strained his ears, anxious to catch the scliff of the tray-bearing caretaker's slow feet. What a time the man took!

"You would come to me?" he asked.

"To you, Mr. Moir? Oh, I should be so, so glad."

"Well, of course—the money has to be talked of." He would have offered her a most unusually high fee willingly—but the surplus would be charity, and he would not insult this young woman with charity. "How would three guineas a week do?" he said.

"Oh!" she cried. "That's what Dick Heldar paid the girl Bessie in *The Light that Failed!* That was the only inkling I could get of prices—and I guessed that was most unusual."

He had a shudder on hearing this girl compare herself with Bessie. He admired *The Light that Failed;* but Bessie, in that narrative, brought off the streets, to be treated well, and to return the kindness with treachery, was a different matter from this woman who sat in his ante-room here, making it—he could not explain how—like a new place to him.

"Models are paid more—and less," said he. "And models are of many, many kinds." Méry paid his *atelier* models sixty francs a week, and he would have paid more but that other masters might have been annoyed. He paid his private models much more.

The bell rang, and Martin sprang erect from his leaning position against the mantel, and hastened to the door. Without stood the returned caretaker, puffing asthmatically, arms wide, carrying a loaded tray.

"Come along, Mr. MacNaughten."

MacNaughten entered, and the odour that came from under the protecting napkins laid over the repast was very refreshing. Martin remembered that he had not

eaten since what he called breakfast—a cup of chocolate, imbibed much against inclination, but stoically, because he thought he drank too much tea. He had had tea later! But no matter—at least his lining was not of tea! Now the odour of tomato soup rejoiced him. He produced another shilling and held it forth to MacNaughten.

"For yourself," he said.

"No, no—no, no, sir," said MacNaughten, and fled. At the door he turned. "Now, sir, that's just soup and cutlets, with vegetables as ordered. Would you like me to fetch you in some pudding? They have college pudding, sago——"

"Sago!" moaned Martin, remembering two years of sago pudding in his "diggings" off New City Road.

"Or tart."

He looked at Miss Alexander.

"Which would you prefer?"

"Am I to have lunch? You have never—oh, this is far too good of you. Oh no—this is excellent."

"I'll bring you a pot of coffee, sir—about quarter of an hour, sir."

"Thank you."

Miss Alexander looked thoughtfully at Martin. "I do believe," said she, "that you have got it into your head that I am starved. I assure you I am not. If I were I would own up—seeing you are so good. You do remind me of Francis. He always got these sort of notions. As a matter of fact I am ready for lunch, but I'm not hungry through bitter poverty—thank goodness! I still have a little money—and lots of dear friends."

"I am very glad. I was afraid it might be pretty stiff with you. In Paris one learns to think things may be bad when a man says he is beginning to worry a

little bit." He served the soup. "I met a man one day who told me he was beginning to feel a little bit worried. I didn't tumble to it. I wished I had afterwards—I wished it often. Next day he jumped over his win—oh, that's miserable! I must not entertain you with such stories as that."

He brought a chair over to the table for her, and could not but notice, as she sat down, how that movement was made for his pen, pencil, or brush.

"Well, I can't say 'no' now that you have ordered it," said she.

He had never in his life felt so much inclined to say Grace before Meat. Had he bowed his head now he would have had no inane prayer to the Deity to make him grateful, or truly thankful. He would have but a silent, interior whoop of praise—for he felt himself to be the happiest and most grateful man in Glasgow.

"I've been asked to illustrate that story you were looking at," said he, "and I think I'll do it."

"That story! Oh, I should like to pose for it for you."

There came another ring at the door bell.

"He's early with that coffee," said Martin, and rose, swung back the curtain, opened the door, and—"Hallo, dad!" he cried out.

"Well, boy!" and Ebenezer Moir held out his hand. "They told me you had been ringing me up every day for a week. Here I am. I've just arrived from Bradford."

"Yes, here you are at last. I told them to tell you I was here just as soon as you came back. I didn't write to Bradford so that you——"

"They did tell me—the moment I arrived. There's a man coming to the ware'us' to see me at three o'clock—and it's now five minutes past!" He gave his deep chuckle. "But I wanted to see you and fix for you to

come up to the club. Meet me there—if you're free to-night, that's to say?''

''I am free. I would make myself free if I wasn't. Let me introduce you——''

''Oh! Oh, I did not notice,'' and Mr. Moir raised his hat and looked at this young woman, who rose now from the table, looked at her with interest, solemnly. If this was some girl to whom his son had been and gone and got himself engaged, he fervently hoped she was the woman for him. ''Marriage,'' he thought, ''is the greatest event in a man's life.''

''This is my father, Miss Alexander,'' said Martin.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Moir was suddenly aware that his scrutiny of the girl whom he found thus sitting at lunch with his son, *tête-à-tête*, a scrutiny longer and deeper than necessary in an ordinary introduction, might appear like rudeness to her, however much it was actually prompted by the most affectionate interest in Martin. He hoped (immediately on the shock of discovering that he had been bending his head and little short of searching her, almost glowering at her, from under concentrated brows), hoped anxiously that she and Martin would both understand that a father does want to have some kind of impression of a young woman whom he discovers lunching with his son, after not having seen the boy for years. He turned to Martin.

"You are looking well, Martin—very well." And then to her: "I haven't seen my son for long. Yes," he looked at Martin, "it must be over a year now since I last looked you up in that Chelsea studio."

"Do sit down, dad."

"I don't know that I should—I've told you of my appointment. I just ran up to see if we can fix up for to-night——"

Once more the bell trilled gaily.

Martin opened, and there was the tubby and oily MacNaughten holding forth a coffee-pot and a jug of hot milk.

"I haven't a tray, sir," said he. "I made this myself; I pride myself on making the best coffee. Shall I clear these things to one side?" He came in and set

down the pot as if it were precious beyond words, and removed the soup plates. "Have you cups, sir?"

"Yes—I have half a dozen, thanks. That's all right. Now, dad, have a cup of coffee."

Mr. Moir noticed the telephone fixed on the wall.

"Why, you're on the telephone!" he said. "I looked up in the book—but, of course, the name is not in yet. You rang up from a call office, they told me."

"Yes, I've only just had it connected. It was busted—the last man must have got tired of being interrupted in the middle of a masterpiece and hit it."

"I'll ring up the ware'us' first," said Mr. Moir, twinkling over his son's explanation. He crossed to the telephone, called for his number, and asked Caird if "that man" had arrived. "Oh! well, well, look here—he's a very good fellow. Tell him I've just met my son, after two years, and—I say, do you hear me?—damn it—er, oh, I beg your pardon, Miss—er, do you hear me? Give him a cigar—I say, give him a cigar, and tell him I'll be back in a quarter of an hour. Yes, yes. All right."

He came back to the table and sat down.

"I feel I should go," said Miss Alexander to him. She had quietly said the same words to Martin while the father was occupied at the telephone, but Martin had shaken his head and murmured: "No, no!" "If you two have not seen each other for two years," she said to Mr. Moir now, "you——"

"No—please." And Mr. Moir held up his hand, palm out in a gesture of courteous determination. "I will just drink this, and——" he sipped. "I say, this is very fine coffee! Did that military person say he made it himself?"

"Yes."

"Ex-officer's man, I expect. He looks it. Well, Mar-

tin, can you meet me at the club to-night at—say six-thirty? Can you? And we'll talk it off."

"All right."

Martin thought his father looked older and changed, but not for the worse. True, there were wine-veins in his cheeks, but he had a self-contained manner that gave him a look of one grown philosophic. He looked as if he had learnt to say, like Montaigne: "I suspend judgment." The likeness to his brother John was more marked now, though his air was more judicial than secretive. Uncle John, until one got to know him, did sometimes seem almost furtive.

Mr. Moir put no pleasant questions to Amy Alexander, such as Mrs. Moir would have had, with her little bend forward, her slight raising of a hand, her engaging tilt of head and radiant expression. He did not say: "You are an old friend of Martin's?" smiling sweetly at her; nor: "Have you known my son long?" He was interested; he would have liked to know; but he took her for granted, quaffed the coffee, congratulated Martin on its aroma, and rose, saying he must really go, bowed to Miss Alexander, took her hand in a friendly fashion, repeated at the door the hour of the meeting arranged for the evening, and departed.

After he had gone—"Come and see the workshop," said Martin, and led the way into his lofty studio. She looked at the few drawings and fewer canvases on, or against, his walls, and appreciated, but did not say so, merely looked and relished.

"I like this view," said he, "one can get out here. There's quite a platform."

She walked to the window and looked out, and as she stood there he said: 'Please don't move. I will have a sketch of that if you don't mind."

"Oh," she said quietly, still looking out, "I did not expect——"

"Nor did I!" he answered.

She maintained the pose, and suddenly realised what she was standing still for.

"This is for the opening of that story—the girl looking out of the window!" she ejaculated to the sky and the roofs, without turning.

He was moving his table over to the place from which, looking at her, he had seen his picture set.

"Um!" he assented, and sat down. "If you go stiff you will please just tell me—and note how you are standing before you give up the pose—where your hand is, before you relax, so that you can take it up again." He worked on for a spell, and then suddenly: "You must be stiff," he said. "I have no idea, when I am working, how time goes."

She was indeed stiff. She could not leave the window, because of cramp. His voice was almost of anger.

"You will really hurt me if you do this again," he said. "You must promise me not to. It will only make me always afraid, as I work, that you are getting cramp and not saying anything."

"But I must do it properly," she declared, laughing and straightening.

"It will spoil my work," he said, "if you don't promise to tell me. I shall always be wondering if you are stiff and saying nothing."

"I promise, then. There! I am all right. My foot has pins and needles, that's all."

"Well, wiggle it a bit. Don't walk on it to get it lively. You can sprain an ankle that way. Just wiggle it, please."

When she assured him she was ready again, he went back to his drawing-table, and she took up her pose.

"No," he said. "Wrong! It's stiff now."

She turned to look at him.

"Have I not got it again?" she asked.

"Steady! Don't move!" he answered. "You have another now which I must get down."

Time flew. Bells were ringing six over Glasgow when he said: "There! That's a good afternoon's work."

"May I look—or does it put you off?"

"No—you can look—certainly." He had known models he could not draw at all because of something like a sneer on their lips. They had seemed to be thinking, even while he drew: "Pooh! You can't do anything like other men I have posed for." He knew men who were put on their mettle by that particular hint of a sneer. Once he had gone to visit a painting friend, who gave him entrance though at work; and had watched the work's progress, seen the busy one knifing paint on to a canvas, the while he muttered: "Take that, damn you! And that! Huh—there! You think I can't put you down on canvas as well as that daubster that you've been posing for. Huh! There—*that's* getting you!" Martin, though he admired, was not like that man. Any ass could put him off his work. Once, in London, a model who had seemed sympathetic suddenly turned supercilious, and that to such an extent that Moir could not retain the working mood, had to tell her it was "no use to-day." The explanation then came out: the lady had been posing for a baronet, and had had her head turned—for some reason—by that. As so few peers paint, it was almost vain to hope that one day she would pose for a peer and disesteem mere knighthood thereafter. Anybody with a hole in his or her head where brains should be, anybody who hated devotion and revelled in contempt, anybody who valued not the work but a prize, as the majority esteem prizes, could

palsy his hand by looking sidewise, or down the nose, at his drawings. A pity—and very foolish of him. He was always absurdly sensitive—from his mother's womb.

Miss Alexander looked at his work of the two and a half hours—three sketches: one of her looking out of the window, that one in a very advanced stage; another of her half turned. "Do I look like that? I suppose I do—I must not be conceited! Francis used to whoop about this line——" And she indicated.

"It's wonderful," said Martin.

"I certainly do appreciate your drawing of it," she said.

The third showed her stooping to pick up a dropped handkerchief. It was a sketch of a few lines—but all that were necessary. He had been afraid of her getting blood to the head—as he had never been afraid on behalf of the models at Méry's.

They went back to the ante-room, where he switched on the electric light, for the day faded more quickly here than in the much-glassed studio, and the contrast gave a feeling of gloom.

"We'll have some tea," said he. "I know you are tired," and he picked up a kettle and departed with it to set it on his stove, and thrust therein, in the way of his kind—non-economical—half a dozen fire-lighters and a bundle of wood. She found herself making a movement to offer her services, then desisted feeling something like shyness.

She filled the gap of his absence by looking at the drawings on the walls, and when he returned was standing before the drawing by Craig. He broke out: "Oh, he's a big man. He loves white, and he knows how to handle it. Isn't he a dandy with his brush? Look at that poster by Simpson, Miss Alexander. I call the Craig my white-and-black, the Simpson my black-and-

white. I say, you're tired. Do sit down, and I'll"—she sat down, protesting that she was not very tired—"tell MacNaughten to get you some sustenance."

"Oh, please no—no!"

"But you must have something."

"I'll have a cup of tea since you——"

"No. You look tired. Tea's not nourishing. It's only bucking up," and he fled from the room, returning presently to say: "I've asked MacNaughten to bring a jug of milk and a plate of sandwiches and some things—just before you go."

"You are really too good, Mr. Moir. I am just troubling you."

"No, no. I need something too. I get tired drawing. You are tired posing."

She looked at the poster on the wall, the one he had been talking of when interrupted by observing that she was tired, and he broke out again in admiration.

He reminded her, rather painfully, of her brother. Thus had Francis extolled his fellows. "Artists are not jealous," she thought to herself. "The butcher, the baker, and candlestick-maker say they are. But what baker would extol the scones of the baker opposite? When artists do depreciate, it is not jealousy that is at the root of the matter, but annoyance at some slur on art, as they see it. Jealous they are not!"

"You told me you were not exactly on a lee shore, Miss Alexander," he interrupted her thoughts, "but if you would care to have——" He took down a tenpenny ginger-jar from his mantel, held it upside down over his hand, and there rained forth a jingly shower of gold and silver—six sovereigns, three shillings, half a dozen sixpenny pieces.

"I have a small annuity," said Miss Alexander doubt-

fully, "but it—er, well—no, no, please! Not the week's. Just give me one—seeing you are so good."

"Is that enough?"

"Quite—quite. Yes, I would tell you if it wasn't, if I needed more."

Opportunity, seeing that both felt a certain sense of unpleasantness (whether it was wise or idiotic to feel so) over this financial question, the little kettle boiled vigorously in the studio, calling Martin away in haste, and the ring of the sandwich-bearing MacNaughten came appropriately on his return. Miss Alexander took up the sovereign and the shilling that he had set down beside her and put them in her purse. Over the repast of warm milk and sandwiches he had his mind much exercised on a subject that was not on his lips—the subject of just how necessitous was the state of Francis Alexander's sister. Had she been a man, or had she been another wielder of pen or pencil, he would have taken it upon himself to hold forth to her all the contents of the ginger-jar. But, well though they had pulled through this amazing afternoon, sensitive himself, he dreaded to hurt her. She seemed so very happy now, munching and sipping and chatting, that he considered things could not be very bad with her after all. When, a little later, she departed, and he walked with her to the elevator, he wondered how he had surmised want upon her face at first; she seemed very happy, a radiant young woman. He bowed her into the elevator, the boy rattled the gate shut, and down she went. She felt an impulse to wave to him as she glided downward, but merely looked up smiling.

No sooner had he returned to his studio than the telephone bell rang. It was Mr. Moir—to ask if he had left the studio.

"No—still here. I'm just coming."

"Oh! I have been detained. I have just rung up the club, in case you were there, to tell them to ask you to wait, and to give you a magazine and a cigar"—the dear old man and his cigars!—"till I should arrive. Make it seven, Martin. I'll be there then."

"Later if you like. Get your business done, and then you'll feel free. I don't mind."

"No—I'll manage by seven. Good-bye for the present."

At seven they met at the club, where, over dinner, and later, to better purpose, over coffee in the retirement of the smoking-room, they gathered up old threads. Martin had been touched by his father's talk while they ate. Sensitive to aspersion, sensitive to interest, he felt the bonhomie that made Mr. Moir begin: "Well, Martin, have you been up to the old School of Art?"

"No, I haven't."

"Ah! We have a school to be proud of. Fra Newbery has made something of it!" This with an accent of: "I am well up in our art news!"

"He's a good man," said Martin, "with a genius for teaching. I hear Greiffenhagen has something to do with it now. I saw some talk of it in a journal somewhere," and as he spoke he helped himself to peas, more (in the first beginning after the years) making conversation than expecting the direct thread to be carried on.

"Newbery is director, Greiffenhagen is one of the professors," said Mr. Moir, "Anning Bell is another. Caird tells me that Anning Bell is a big man too, a fine draughtsman. They have visiting masters as well, just as you told me in your letters from Paris they have over there at the schools."

"Indeed!"

"Oh yes," and Mr. Moir tucked in, as he would say,

with relish to his dinner. "Then there's Walton too. Is he good?"

"Sure!" said Martin, which was a term of strong agreement he had learnt from Theodore Reynolds of Noo Yawk.

"Where did you learn that?" asked his father. "It reminds me of the Canadian buyers."

Martin smiled when it dawned upon him, after a puzzled moment, to what Mr. Moir referred.

"I suppose I got it from an American at Méry's. How is Marks?" he asked. "Is he still——"

"Oh yes, he still comes over—not as often—he's fixed more on the other side. He always talks of you. Almost gets on my nerves!" said the old man—laughing, to indicate that Marks didn't. "I think he would like to brag that he discovered that you were an artist—instead of that he discovered that you were unable to see scarlet thread when it crossed drab!"

Martin smiled.

"You never feel the lack in painting, do you?" Mr. Moir asked, referring to the so-called colour-blindness.

"Oh well—I hardly do any painting now. I've drifted on and on, deeper into black-and-white and etchings. It is all atoned for, more than atoned for. I always was crazy about line. But I am interested to note how many people talk about the suggestion of colour in my etchings. It seems to hit them. They wonder why I don't go in for flaming and blazing canvases sometimes. That's *my* secret."

Mr. Moir nodded—and proposed an adjournment to a smoking-room. There the talk was more intimate, personal; but it was long before Mrs. Moir was mentioned. Martin felt a dread of her, a dread of talking of her. He could not tell why. He was becoming (he

feared) superstitious regarding her; he was almost a monomaniac, with his mother for his mania. If he did not beware he would be inventing some exorcism to perform on mentioning her name. For now, after the ease that had come on deciding to ignore her letters, he felt toward her, at times, as the man who sat at the bank door in *The Tale of Two Cities* felt toward his wife when all did not go smoothly—that she was "floppin' agin' him!"

"She's wonderfully well," said Mr. Moir. "Yes, wonderfully well." He looked up at the ceiling and plucked his beard. "We are very good friends—yes; but our interests—well, well, we seem to have very little in common. A man and woman should never marry, Martin, unless they have no question, no faintest question, in their minds. They must be," he paused and wagged his head, "friends, and then they'll become—ah well, never mind. Some more coffee, boy?"

He blew smoke for a little while, in silence, meditating how, when Martin wrote to him a month ago saying he would soon be coming to Glasgow, he had tried to prepare the way for a peaceful homecoming, and for a fresh understanding between mother and son, by mentioning that piece of news. She had taken his announcement not as a sign that he sought peace so much, as a sign that his determination not to mention Martin had broken down. It was a sign, to her, of weakness. She therefore replied: "Indeed!"

That had been all her answer, accompanied by a slow deliberate arrangement of the lace at her wrists, so he had not pursued the theme.

"Yes," he continued to Martin, coming back from these considerations, "the only thing worth having is the best. What does not call for reservations to be made, or concessions; what doesn't make one say: 'Well, of

course, things being as they are——' that is all that is worth aiming for. You follow me?"

Martin nodded. He felt great pity for his father. He had never known him thus of old. He had been a boy meeting a man, and that man his father. Now (after the absence) it was more just as though a young man met an old man, relationship a side issue, friendship dominant. And the old man tried to explain his philosophy of life, or one phase of it.

"Of course this is only my opinion—my opinion. Of course, of course, after things have gone a certain length—before one knows—one has to do one's best. You are not—er—thinking of—er—getting married yourself?"

"No—still playing a lone hand."

"Um!"

Thereafter they stretched back in their chairs, more at ease, and their talk was no longer difficult; for they talked of matters that were less personal.

"It's very comfortable here—very comfortable, isn't it?" said Mr. Moir, after a long silence. He glanced at the clock. "I'm staying here to-night so as to have a long spell with you."

"Staying here? For me? Mother won't be anxious, will she?"

"I wired her—I wired her. Yes, she would worry. She expected me back—I wrote from Bradford when I would be back, but I wired this afternoon as soon as I saw that I was to be detained at the ware'us' and would be later of meeting you here. Yes, yes. Uh-hu, uh-hu! Well, perhaps," a waiter passed by, and Mr. Moir glanced at him as if to speak, then continued: "It's a long way to Bearsden. When you feel inclined—when you feel inclined—the house is there, don't you know. Waiter! Just—er—let me have another liqueur."

Martin, feeling *en rapport* with his father, had a suspicion that this was Mr. Moir's exorcism for lurking disappointments in his heart. He sank back in the saddle-bag and briefly and deeply considered the advisability of going out to see his mother, for his father's sake; was so considering, biting a knuckle and frowning, when Mr. Moir (as if there had been telepathic message) came out with:

"Think it over, Martin, think it over. It's beyond me. I don't like to talk about it. I don't understand it. You see your mother even went the length of going to Lon——" (Oh no! That was never to be said)—"of—what was I going to say? Oh yes—of getting haughty the other day when I mentioned you were coming back. We hadn't been talking of you. I sometimes wonder if she is jealous of your work." And then he was sorry he had said *that*. Recovering from a pitfall, he had stepped into a quagmire. "It might put you off, Martin—see here. I'll try again to pave the way. I'll try again. Dear me, dear me. Life's so short for such bickering business! Yes, yes," he grumbled to himself as the waiter drew nearer. "Thank you, waiter. I won't ask you to take another, Martin."

"No thank you, dad."

The subject was not again touched upon that evening.

CHAPTER VI

Although Martin Moir had not the air of being Miss Alexander's employer, seemed less that than a friend, it was always as model and artist that they confronted each other when she pressed the bell of his studio and he, opening the door, rattled back the curtain for her entrance. The question always was: "Do you need me to-day?" And if he did not *need* her for his illustrating work, but was otherwise occupied, she never remained in occupancy. His old friend Fortuny, Mariano Fortuny—a face looking out of a page in an old magazine—was party to the change that came in their relations after some weeks. One day she saw a pen-and-ink study that Martin had made, the model for which was one well known in Glasgow for his bibulous countenance; though, as a matter of fact, his looks were slanderers, he being temperate, nay, abstemious, in the matter of fermented liquors. But by reason of his outward man he posed for Bacchus, girt about with leopard-skin and crowned with vine-leaves; he posed, slightly fattened by the artist's imagination, for Falstaff; posed, with equal ease, for the village-tippler in drawings that were commissioned to carry off a bottle-joke in a flippant illustrated weekly. At sight of Martin's pen-drawing of that worthy, which lay upon his table on her arrival one morning—"Oh," she cried out, "that recalls a reproduction I once saw of a pen-and-ink by Simonetti! You have your man holding up a glass; the Simonetti study of a character like this shows him holding a bottle."

"Simonetti!" he ejaculated. "This one?" and routed deep in a portfolio, disclosing at last a print of the drawing she had in mind, Simonetti's "Vintage Wine." It was a day or two later that the incident had its sequel, when she was looking over a booklet on Fortuny, Yriarte's *Fortuny,* part of Martin's treasure-trove of Paris days.

"Why does this Fortuny remind me of Simonetti?" she asked, holding the booklet up. "Is it the handling, or is it something else? Yes! It makes me think of Simonetti's 'Vintage Wine.'"

There was another search in the portfolio; the "Vintage Wine" of Simonetti was again educed, and—

"It's the same model!" said she. "I thought so!"

Those who know the charm of pottering over the intimate side-issues of art will comprehend what this discovery meant. Those who have knowledge of the making of friendship (and that is everybody) will gather that a friendship was springing up here. The subject took hold on them. They conjectured in what circumstances the drawings were made. They collaborated over an unwritten story of the old model; interviewed him in imagination and invented speeches from his lips—his views on art and the two artists; but the story fell down in the middle for want of knowledge, was sheer fancy, not founded-upon-fact, like this. Their story was "bricks without straw," and their own half-finished fancy made them thirst for data, if not regarding the model—for that seemed hopeless as desiring the moon—at least regarding the two artists who had put him down in pen-and-ink.

"Let us try the Library," suggested Martin.

"It does fascinate," she admitted.

"Come along, then."

A strange emotion came to Martin as they walked to

the Library. He had never been abroad with Amy Alexander before, had been no farther beyond his door with her than to the elevator at the corridor's end, to press the bell, and to nod good-night as she stepped into the cage. There was something came to him in walking along with her, or finding himself walking with her—that was how it felt—immensely good. There is a line in one of Mr. Bridges' poems: "The fairest moments of our broken dreams." She seemed to belong, as they say, with the fairest moments of his life—with morning walks to Giffnock Quarries when the blackbirds were still trilling in ecstasy over re-created day; with those nights when he awoke, rested, long before dawn, and watched all the quiet changes in the sky. He found himself wanting to buy up all the delicately tinted sweet-peas in the florists' windows and bank them before her, saying: "You are fresh as these." Not that she was at all a mere flower to him as so many girls, for example, seem to have been to Herrick. She fitted in with the day as he saw it—and caused him to see everything as more exquisite than was wont even on his best days: the grey-blues of the old stone, the parallelogram of sky, set between receding vistas of street, meshed with telegraph wires like pen-scratches. A rare joy came to him, came deeply home to him, as he found himself stepping along with her, feeling that everything was a miracle from the sky to the paving-stones.

The Library told them little more than they knew already by the evidence of the two drawings—that the two artists were contemporary; but in hunting for data for their "Imaginary Interview with an Elderly Model" they came on much else, and pursuing the everlasting chain of knowledge, before they were well aware, discovered suddenly that it was long past lunch-time. This hunting up of encyclopædias, under the spell of

Silence ordained in the Library, and adhered to by all decent folk, had been a deaf-and-dumb business, necessitating interchanging of volumes, pointing of forefingers to lines giving cumulative evidence; and the attempts to do even these things stealthily, so as not to get upon the nerves of other studious readers at the tables, were exhausting.

"I told MacNaughten to have lunch ready at one—and it is a quarter to two," Martin wrote upon a piece of paper which he passed to Amy, and gathering together the volumes consulted, he carried them to the counter, handed them over and turned, to find Amy waiting for him—in a pose, all unconscious, made for his pencil. Back in the studio again, to the relief of MacNaughten (who was in a high fever over the agonising thought of cold victuals), they had out the two drawings that had sent them forth, and Martin mounted them on boards of the same size and framed them in thin black frames in keeping with the rich pen-marks. All else was taken from the wall above the mantel in the ante-room, and these two drawings were hung there—somewhat as explorers' plant flags. To Amy, though she would not allow herself to tarry a moment on the thought, often though it came up in following days in the studio, they seemed to signify something wonderful, hanging there.

"I don't think," said he, after the framing and hanging were over and MacNaughten had removed the dishes, "that Father Aaron is going to turn up to-day, and I'm jolly glad." Father Aaron was the name, in the studios, for the venerable gentleman that Martin was using, with slight changes of his face, for the kindly uncle in the serial story for *The Whitehall*. "I hope he doesn't, for I want to get you down in dry-point if you think you can fall again into the pose you had in the Library while you were waiting—oh, here he is,"

for the bell rang mockingly. "Well, I'd better not turn him away—I want him for these *Whitehall* things." He opened to Aaron—for Aaron it was who had rung—gave him good-afternoon, and asked him to go into the studio.

"That settles it, then," said Martin, coming back to Amy. "There's no sense in you hanging on here, Miss Alexander. I'll be tired when I'm through with him——" Something reproachful (or in the neighbourhood of reproachful) in her eyes stopped him abruptly. "Oh—eh—perhaps you would rather stay here—if you have nothing doing at home?"

"If I could sit here and read," said she, and then felt furious with herself, for thus, it struck her, did designing females squat down in siege, or occupancy, until there was nothing for the poor honourable man to do but buy the ring!

"Oh, all right. If it's like that," said he, "do. At that rate, I'll perhaps be able to make a beginning after he goes. I know exactly what I want him to do. I want just a few ten-minute poses from him." He chuckled. "Don't the very creases of his coat exude the venerable?" he said in guarded tones and, in more guarded tones: "And such a charming old fraud!"

The two hours that poor old Aaron posed, as the philanthropist in the serial narrative, fled—fled as all the hours of all the days seemed to flee in the studio. After he had gone Martin went back there for something, upset a bottle of ink on a sketch, and "Damn!" he ejaculated. Next moment he was at the door of the ante-room and his head came in.

"Did you hear?" he asked, sepulchral.

"I did!" And she laughed.

"I beg your pardon," said he. "I am——"

"Please don't be foolish. I have heard you often."

He stared.

"You say it as unconsciously as you drink tea," she assured him. "It signifies nothing more than that you have made a line by accident that necessitates the scrape of a knife or the application of a touch of Chinese white! It worries me much less than your tea-drinking! I hope you don't think I am interfering, but really you drink too much tea. Why do you keep on tea-drinking?"

"I don't know. It seems to help to wipe out things that come up too often."

She gave him one quick look as of startlement.

"Well, tea is ready now," she said, "and if you will allow me, I shall empty the pot and put it away after you have risen from the table."

"Perhaps it would be better," he agreed. "I am really sorry about swearing. I didn't know that I——"

"That's nothing. I don't like to hear a woman swear. Sauce for the gander is *not* sauce for the goose. But a woman who could take umbrage at an etcher making such slight explosion over his proof-pulling would be too vindictive for words—and very hard up for excuse to appear triumphant over him."

He had now a quick, fleeting glance of interest at her.

He pondered this point of view, so unlike that of the court queened by his mother, standing there like a jack-in-the-box at the communicating door. She was perilously near to saying: "Oh, you dear, droll man!" when the bell trilled—a contented trill!—and she felt grateful to it. Martin opened the door.

"Well, Martin," came a big voice, "I haven't seen you for a fortnight. I was at the Club lunching a man, and I've just seen him off. Thought I would run up and have a look at you."

"You're just in time for tea," said Martin. "Put your hat on the—over there—settee."

Mr. Moir laughed, bowed to Miss Alexander, and looked at the teapot in her hand.

"It wouldn't matter when I came up here, I think," said he, "I would always be just in time for tea."

"Miss Alexander has been saying something to the same effect," said Martin. "She tells me that after tea is over to-day I have to reform. The pot is to be emptied —and then tea is finished."

"Very wise," answered Mr. Moir, but he considered to himself: "So *these* are the terms they are on!"

"I am in a quandary," she said to Martin. "I hate an interfering, bossing woman—but you drink tea on and on when you are at work. I have been wondering whether to speak or to hold my peace ever since I came up here and saw your methods with a teapot."

Mr. Moir had a fresh look at her, of interest—and liking. She had no desire to adopt the owning attitude; she advised a cessation of this tea-tippling only after having decided that she would so advise any friend, male or female. Mr. Moir sat down to drink a cup with them and eat some toast, and laughingly drew attention to the fact that a man may advise his friend to give up tea-tippling, but may not advise him to give up whisky-dramming so easily. "I suppose," said he, "because tea-tippling is less injurious. The subject is too serious when you come to whisky! If you tell a man to stop whisky, you insult him. If you tell him to stop tea, you only bore him!"

The desire not to meddle, or, as Marks of Montreal would say, "butt in," was very strong in him as he sat there largely, in an old polished chair, right ankle resting on left knee, cup in hand, Viking-like head up. He was attracted greatly by Miss Alexander; he found her very young, very fresh, very likeable; he had never met a lass quite like her. He wondered a good deal

about this girl who seemed to be so much of a fixture in his son's studio. But he would ask no question. He had erred once in wielding suzerainty over his son. Now there should be no question, lest it seemed as if he considered that being the father he had to be given account to. With Amy Alexander before him, certainly he could not have any sinister suggestion in response to his unspoken questions. Here was no parasite, nor entrapper, to make a father's heart sad for the son. It was her "position," as he might have said, in the studio, that he did not understand.

"And what have you been doing to-day, Martin?" he asked.

"Come and see," said Martin, and he led the way to the studio; and suddenly the old man broke out: "I say!" Martin, turning to find the cause of the explosion, saw his father in an attitude of arrest, gazing admiringly at one of the sketches of Miss Alexander.

"Splendid!"

"I adapted that sketch for a magazine illustration," said Martin. "I have a copy somewhere. Miss Alexander, have you seen *The Whitehall?*"

"Here it is!"

Martin took the magazine from her.

"You can carry this copy along with you. I was going to send you one at any rate," he said, turning the pages open in quest of the one on which was his illustration. He held it forth.

"Oh!" Mr. Moir's tone was of disappointment. "It is not a portrait. It is just the pose here. It is the portrait I like. Still—I'll take this, if I may."

Martin looked at the original sketch of Amy thoughtfully—then at Amy, uncertain—then at the sketch again. It was a crowded moment. His inclination was to give his father the admired sketch, yet he felt that he should

ask her permission; next, he asked himself why he felt so—looked at her for her opinion, as to say: "May I?" But her eyes did not meet his.

"And there's your man who makes the coffee," broke out Mr. Moir, who had moved on, unconscious of these "switherings" in Martin's mind, thinking only: "So she's his model! Well—a very fine girl!" He stood before a charcoal sketch of MacNaughten that was affixed to the wall with a drawing-pin, twinkling waggishly at the presentment of that amusing mixture of the unctuous, the well-meaning, the self-seeking.

"That's a good portrait too. Does he sit for you—stand for you—what do you call it?—pose for you much? I thought he was the caretaker and coffee-maker!"

"So he is, but he's jolly good for a major-domo, so I appropriated him. He's rather glad. His wife makes him hand over all his wages weekly, and his pension on pension day—goes with him to collect. I don't blame her! He hands it over, and she gives him back a shilling to spend——"

"That's like one of my packers. His wife is always on sentry-go outside the ware'us' on Friday night to convoy him home. I suppose your major-domo keeps very quiet about this little posing business on the side to his good lady?"

Martin laughed.

"Rather! I've had him in three times. He asked me as a special favour not to tell his wife. Queer people. They've a sort of affection for each other. Queer sort of business. It beats me. When she comes in here to clean she runs him down; when he poses for me he winks to me and says: 'Don't you tell the wife!' They fight one day and make it up the next—seems primitive."

"Um, yes—queer business," murmured Mr. Moir, frowning.

"I believe he won't be able to keep from showing her this when he sees it reproduced," said Martin. "Despite all that, they are keen on each other in their own way. I told him he would appear in a magazine, and he was quite excited at the prospect. He'll have to show it to her—just have to, I expect—and then after she's got over the non-commercial pleasure, she'll have to know how much he got for posing. And then—then he'll have to shell out."

"Or lie to her about what you give him," said Mr. Moir.

"Or else," suggested Miss Alexander, with a touch of gentle chaffing in her voice, "he will be given a little more next time so as to be able to retain some without creating suspicion."

Mr. Moir wheeled round on her and laughed.

"Is he like that?" said he, meaning his son. "I haven't seen him for some years now—to study. You will know him better than I in these ways. Hullo!" He had caught sight of the sketches of Aaron—Aaron sitting; Aaron walking; Aaron meditating, finger-tips to finger-tips before him. "I met the original of these sketches at the foot of your stairs just now, did I not?"

"Very likely," said Martin.

Mr. Moir smiled.

"What's the joke?" Martin asked.

"Well—er——"

"Did he speak to you?"

"Yes—he asked me for a match."

"He would. He's a queer old fish. Matches and tobacco he never buys——"

Mr. Moir laughed outright.

"Funny you should say that. As I gave him some

matches he said to me in the most unctuous tones: 'May I ask, sir, what is the blend of your cigar—as a connoisseur—the aroma——' And he had a gesture with it that you would have enjoyed."

"You gave him a cigar, of course?"

"Oh yes."

"Yes, he has wonderful gestures. He's really an actor. One sees the man leer through the mask often when drawing him—but he hates to be used for anything of a Uriah Heep character." Mr. Moir was looking with curiosity at the etching press, and Martin gave as succinct an explanation of the mechanical side of etching as possible; but after his father departed he felt inclined to let the dry-point of Amy, for that day, remain a promise, and finish off another drawing (spurred by his father's appreciation) for *The Whitehall*. He sat down to it, and was soon utterly engrossed. She, passing from the studio, tucked up her sleeves and fell to work washing the cups.

She did not do this without a vast amount of argument. Item: did it seem like taking possession? Item: would not any model wash up the dishes that had been used for the day's refreshment of herself and the artist who employed her? Further: she did not like to leave this man to wash up the dishes she had used. Well, she would wash them, at any rate. She looked very solemn over the tin basin: why did she find this simple affair so difficult to settle? There must be some reason for weighing so—almost perturbedly—the pros and cons of washing up a few pieces of china.

The washing over, she noticed that the room was dishevelled, disarranged, and she must needs tidy up before going. She was still so employed, dusting and arranging, when the artist came from the studio.

"You've been——" he began, looking round. "Why,

you've washed the dishes and you've been dusting—and all as quiet as a mouse. You should not have done it. I wash up everything at night."

"It is very lazy of me to let you," she said.

"Oh, all right," he answered, and held forth for her inspection one more drawing ready to post to *The Whitehall.*

"You can draw, Mr. Moir," said she, looking at it as he propped it on the mantelpiece.

He looked from it to the Fortuny, to the Simonetti, back to the Fortuny.

"I can't draw like Fortuny," he sighed.

"I don't know," she dared to say.

"No, no. I think I've done well when I get my best to the pitch of his worst!"

She did not agree. She felt a touch of dislike for Fortuny, despite her admiration!

"You work differently. You're not an imitator," she said. "Besides—you're young!"

"Me? Yes. But only another year and I'll be the age he was when the Roman fever laid him low."

She looked, for a moment, in horror, at nothing at all, staring before her, an expression he missed as he sat down to await the drying of the illustration.

"I'll wait and post it for you," said she, her hat on, but seating herself again, and before she knew—probably the theme was suggested by the visit of Martin's father—she was (while she waited) far advanced in the story of her father and his last years.

Mr. Alexander, it appeared, had always been open-handed. The year before his smash he had kept open house at Braemar for friends from Glasgow and Edinburgh. After the failure some of these friends, who had been guests at his house-party, were gossiping maliciously about him in the most flagrant way. One, un-

aware that a friend of Amy's was present when she spoke, had said that she was disgusted with him—that she would never visit him again—that he had no right to speculate. Amy's friend had suggested that many speculate, and some are successful, and none contemn them. The other had responded that Mr. Alexander was "a fraud"—patronising people, keeping open house, inviting friends, taking them about in his motor-car, no mere eighty-guinea two-seater, but a flaunting luxuriance upon tyres. "Perhaps," Amy's friend had suggested, although considering, in the phrase of the man in the street, that it was none of that person's business, "he had no idea that things were so near the brink."—"Oh yes, he had indeed," had been the response. "I have sat at his table and seen telegram after telegram come to him—and he read them over his dinner and couldn't eat, and his wife said: 'Oh, Willie, do eat!' and he said: 'I can't; I don't know whether I am a millionaire or a pauper.' I know, for I was one of his guests." Amy's friend had said: "You were one of the guests, and you talk like this?"—"Certainly," had replied the self-righteous vixen. "But I wouldn't eat at that man's table again. I wouldn't break bread with him."

Amy had never been able to forget this story. She told it now, talking of her father, told also how another woman present had said: "Oh, well, I called to see them after the failure. I thought it was only nice to do so. But I called after dinner." Amy's friend (who was surely misguided to tell her of the scene, for what good could knowledge of it do?), rising to depart then, remarked: "To save the expense of an extra mouth, seeing that they might be poor, I suppose?"—"Oh, well, no," was the reply, "not exactly. On principle I felt I couldn't sit down to table with a man who had made such

show—and then come down that way. I had to take coffee with them. I arrived too soon after dinner, and could not refuse."—"Oh!" cried the other, determined (in her, not even one drop of the milk of human kindness, it would appear), sticking to her point, "I would have refused. No, I wouldn't *bow* to him if I met him on the street. What right had he to pose as—ah!" For it seemed this poisoner was so furious at the failure of one who had once entertained her that she could not finish articulately, and ended with a scream.

Undoubtedly Amy's friend should not have repeated it all. Such people exist, but no good was to come (to Amy) of hearing of them. Amy recalled how her parents used to invite them here—there—everywhere, in pity for their scanty means that denied them holidays; and because they were worshippers at the church attended by her parents. She felt very bitter indeed toward them. Her father had been dead a year now, her mother nine months, but often she thought of these women and felt, said she, murderous. She talked of them now to Martin for relief. They had come up and stung her again in memory. But, despite her words, Martin did not think they had poisoned. She had antidotes.

"I really begin to hate women!" she said feelingly, making an end of the tale, and then, while Martin murmured: "These ones seem to have been pretty bad," she exclaimed: "I would like to be a good woman! I always feel so when I meet women like——"

"You are!" he broke out. He was on the point of saying: "You are the best, the most splendid woman in the world," but "You are!" was all he spoke.

She started; the tone of his voice gave her a kind of catch at the heart.

"Oh, I don't know," she said more soberly. "Con-

sider me now! I find myself hating these women too much."

"I don't think," said he, wisely consoling, "that you should feel so about hating them, as you call it. What you hate is their hatred. They are hateful. You hate Hate! Oh, I've met them!" he cried out unexpectedly. "I've met them—some ignorant as Kafirs, others with a diploma for erudition—but they are all the same—impervious to ideas, self-righteous, vindictive, savage! They make one have moments—never mind!"

He rose and paced the room, very pale, his eyes bright, his face suddenly lined.

His life, evidently, even if he would have liked it to be so, was not all making of drawings with joy, to delight the eyes of those who care for such things, and collecting of his beloved Vierges and Fortunys. Other existences clashed with his too. He was on the point of giving her some parallel passages from his own experience when there came into his memory a scathing drawing by Vallotin called "The Confidante." That shut his lips.

"Well, anyhow," said he, "you are an awfully decent sort. Francis said he wished I could see you. He spoke of you often that time I went to Clovelly with him."

Her eyes were far off. Her heart beat quick.

"Francis used to pet me," she said. "We used to get along well together." Then: "What about to-morrow?" she asked hurriedly.

"To-morrow? To-morrow? To-morrow I am going down to the docks. Oh—and I say, for the day after I have made an arrangement to get into a shipbuilding yard at Govan."

"Well, I must be off. If you take my advice you will go and see some friends to-night. You want a change. You've done heaps to-day."

"I'm going up to a second-hand book-shop in Buchanan

Street," said he. "The man there has a lot of old volumes—literary value *nil*—and I'm going to get the end-papers out. Ripping paper they made a hundred years ago. Just what I want for my etchings."

"If you stay here you'll brood—I know."

"Not a bit of it—I never brood. On occasion I meditate," he said, laughing.

"Well, don't step over the border line," said she, rising to go. "And don't sit drinking stewed tea until it is time for you to go up for your end-papers!"

"Don't you worry about me," said he. "And take to yourself the advice you give—remember that the poisoners are the woeful folk—not those they try to poison," and he walked out to the elevator with her.

"Two whole days till I see him again!" she thought after saying: "Good-night, Mr. Moir."

"I wish I could have her always here," Martin meditated, returning to his studio.

Then he sat down and brooded over Miss Tanner, Sarah Lane, and his mother, till some part of him got up angrily and called the other part an idiot, a baby, and the part so maligned put up a defence that it was neither idiot nor baby, but something quite otherwise. Then he rose abruptly and went off to overhaul the musty old calf-bound volumes for their end-papers.

Long days for both of them were these two days that followed, long days, although both were busy, Amy visiting friends, or performing various items of stitching and darning and tidying (and refusing to allow herself to dream any dreams of the future); he, the first day, in a corner at Kingston Dock, sketching stevedores at work unloading a black tramp ship. What a great world it was! The clatter of the stevedores' tackety heels on the iron gang-plates was part of its music! And it was good. And these drawings must be good; for the credit

of Glasgow they must be good; for the credit of his own hand—and so that Miss Alexander would be proud to say she knew him!

Next day he was in a big shipyard beyond Govan, taken round by a youth told off to be polite to him. He caught many a wild glint from the eyes of riveters at work under the steamer's hull beside their little forges in which the rivets glowed. What small, fierce figures they were as they swung their hammers on the white-hot rivets, smashing them home in the iron hull, so that sparks leapt all round them. It was as if they hammered gold studs into the plates. They turned and looked at him; they seemed to say: "Well, what does he want?" He felt like one visiting Inferno to make sketches.

"I must try to get acclimatised here," thought he, "or else I shall have only the outsider's view. I see the Steel Age here as very savage. The idea is to get inside without getting inside so slobberingly as to forget that there's an outside."

He remained in the deafening yards till the "knocking-off" whistles blew, and went out with the crowd that surged up into Govan Road, feeling depressed. He must leave this sort of thing to Brangwyn and Meunier, thought he. Still—"Riveters" is one of the most vigorous of The Glasgow Set. But his riveters are in hell—and are devils. On returning to town he went into the Caledonian Railway Station—a station changed from what it was in the old days when he used to have a season-ticket to Mount Florida. It was to procure a copy of *The Whitehall Magazine* to give to MacNaughten (and leave it to him to decide whether to show it to Mrs. MacNaughten, or to refrain from showing it) that he came to the station now. Approaching the bookstall he walked into the most amazing experience. A girl was looking at the magazines festooned round the stall, and

as he saw her he paused, and his heart beat irregularly for a moment.

He felt (though, to be sure, he was beyond considering anything in the way of parallel cases, or illustrative songs—and they are offered here only in attempt to suggest his frame of mind), he felt, then, that here, as it is phrased in the music-hall song, was the One Girl in the World for Him; or, as it is in Crashaw, in far other song, that here, looking at the newspaper stall in the Caledonian Station, was the "not impossible She." But the moment was neither banal as music-hall song, nor sacredly sentimental as Crashaw. And there was in this large emotion that had come to him through his eyes no desire for her "to command." To accompany was nigher the feeling. But at the behest of no emotion may a man advance upon an unknown woman and tell her such craziness. Small value would his sudden attachment hold if it could drive him to charge upon her and affront her with preposterous love-speech, as if escaped from Gartnavel. Two thoughts came to Martin, came in haste, atop of his arrest by this Unsuspecting She before the newspaper stall: one was that presently she would move away and he would never see her again—for he could not follow her like a stalking tiger. He loved her too well! The other was that he was being unfaithful to Amy Alexander in this amazing, this inexplicable, devotion.

Yet how could he be untrue to a woman to whom he had said no word of love? Perhaps it was because this girl had a certain resemblance to Amy Alexander that he was assailed by that thought? It must be that—it must be. Yes, she *was* like Amy Alexander, such another. Yet could there be two such as Amy Alexander in the world? That was the next thought—from which it would appear that Amy stood high in his worshipping mind.

This girl was a trifle taller, perhaps. She turned round from looking at the magazines in the window—and was revealed as Amy Alexander. It was indeed she—in a new costume, wearing a new hat, and with shoes upon her feet a trifle higher in the heels than she had been wearing. She had been shopping in these off days.

"Oh!"

"Oh! Oh, you do look tired, Mr. Moir!"

He gazed at her—speech gone.

"You've been at work all day again," she said. "You overdo it. Have you had supper?"

"No. Not yet."

"When did you have some food last?"

"I forget. I say—there is a little part of a cold chicken in the studio. Come home with me—come to the studio—and have some supper with me there."

They stood before the hospitably illuminated magazine booth. Passers-by in the station, who chanced to see them, must surely have felt happier and better for them, as if they had come upon a new rare lyric with the real thing in it.

"I have had supper," Amy answered. "But—but I would like to come up. How did you get along to-day at the shipyard?"

No answer.

"How did you get on at the shipyard?" she asked again as they fell in step, walking towards the exit—he without his *Whitehall Magazine* for which he had come here. Still there was no answer. She looked at him, wondering what might be the cause of the brown study. They were in the street before her question percolated through.

"Eh? Oh, I beg your pardon—very well, thank you. I say—I say—I must say something—I must say it before we go up to the studio." He caught her elbow to ensure

a safe crossing, and they were on the north side of the street before he continued: "It's got to be said—but it would be more decent to say it here. I would feel as if I had lured you up there on false pretences—because I'm only asking you there to say it, to tell you" —he took a fresh breath—"that when I saw you just now I thought——"

She looked straight before her at the rise of Renfield Street flanked by lamps, each in its own mellow haze, for there was a moist air. Those who passed by were, to both, faint as ghosts might be.

"When—when I saw you I did not recognise you, and I said to myself: 'What a woman!' I felt I must never lose sight of you—of her, I mean." Amy looked round slowly at him, hushed. "But I felt I was not worthy to—next moment I thought of you, and felt as if I was being—as if I was not being decent to you in feeling that way towards this other woman. Do you follow?"

"Yes, dear," she said very quietly, understanding perfectly, it seemed, but none the less amazed.

"Dear? Oh, my dear!" he cried. There was a tremendous rattle of lorries on the mid-street, clang and buzz of electric cars, conflicting tapping and shuffling of footsteps, merging of voices all round them. "You would—you would—we—I do love you so deeply. I felt I must confess to you how I felt towards that girl who was looking in that window—and she was you."

"I'm very glad she was," said Amy.

He was just able to hear her reply in the midst of all the din—and took a long breath of relief. All was well.

CHAPTER VII

THREE weeks had fled since that great night when it seemed not extravagant to say the stars sang together, had fled as life flies to all who are immensely aware of their existence. At the end of the third week Amy had to go to Loch Lomond to see a lady of many snows who had once upon a time been a retainer in the house of Alexander, her duties having been, it appeared, to smile and be pleasant and wear old lace, and chatter French to the children for two hours daily—in the old house that was theirs before the smash; a square house on the old Rutherglen Road, surrounded by lawns, haunted by a rookery. This old dame, having been long in Scotland, outliving her kindred in her own land, felt that Dinan would be too desolate for her. Never, never, so she explained her preference, if she went back there, would she see the old faces. And to live in the old place, and not see the old faces, would make her feel too lonely—always, always; and she was wont to give a little rippling laugh over the explanation, as if it did not matter so much after all. Now she lived upon her savings in a cottage by Loch Lomond side, in a village called "France." She had spent some summers there with the family; and the name, probably, as well as the scene, appealed to her. There she gathered wrinkles, and pottered away her last days, and had the *Figaro* two days a week, and was petted by the villagers.

It was Amy's absence that caused Martin to remember his father! Too bad! He had been immersed in his own affairs so whole-heartedly that he had not so much

as hailed Mr. Moir over the telephone-wire once in that time. "I am a self-centred beast," he said to himself. "I suppose if Amy had not left me to-day I should have forgotten his existence still." And forthwith he took hat and coat from the peg and departed for Glassford Street. He was astonished to see, on arrival at 101, that only two windows now advertised his father's premises. The one that used to bear the words: "Manufacturer—and in Bradford, Yorks," now announced: "Evans & Llewellyn—Drysalters." Good life! he knew things had not been going well—but he did not know that the warehouse was shrinking. His father must feel this! When he swung open the door of 101, and the odour of cloth rushed out to him he came back to self again; for there rushed into him, also a queer feeling that though he was still called "Martin Moir" it was not he who had once worked here—if the word "worked" is appropriate—hat atilt, blunt-nosed scissors in waistcoat pocket. He felt as if the thing that pushed the door open was merely a kind of house of flesh and bone (called "Martin Moir") that had harboured many tenants, and that each of these tenants, on departing, had left its successor a full history, not only of himself, but of his predecessors! He returned to thoughts of his father again in the passage-way. At the end was now a wall, and on that wall was painted:

EBENEZER MOIR.
Manufacturer.

EVANS & LLEWELLYN.
Drysalters.

He turned to the left as into the old counting-house—and found himself in a kind of box, wood partitions all round him with glass, opaque glass, at the top only. In this box three doors offered themselves: on one was the word "Private," on another "Counting-House," on another "Warehouse." He thrust back the warehouse

door—and beheld more changes. The warehouse did not extend clear back to Hutchinson Street now; it was bricked up about the place where the Fancy Goods department counter used to be. The rear wall of the reconstructed warehouse was on the hither side of what had been the well-like centre. All the warehouse that remained was visible on entering. An old, lean, bald man at a table turned round.

"Why—it's not—God bless bless ma heart an' soul! Well, Mr. Martin!" And Archie Templeman extended his hand.

At that voice Martin lost the queer sense of having been told about the warehouse and its workers, rather than of having worked in it and known them. He felt aware again of his own identity, unbroken identity. It was all the one Martin Moir, after all, who had lived through the years.

"How are you, Archie?" said he.

"Man, Ah'm fine. There's changes, eh?"

"By Jove, yes!"

"Yer faither didn't tell you?"

"He told me of changes—yes; but I didn't expect to see the old place so greatly changed as this."

"Ah-hah! Aye, man, we all change. Maybe ye haven't *asked* yer faither much about the business?"

Martin looked depressed.

"I'm afraid not, Archie. I have thought of little but my own affairs."

"We all do. Aye, just our own affairs—till we get a knock. Knocks are good for folks sometimes. Of course there's mair excuse for an artist being self-centred. He's not just interested in makin' money. All life is makin' pictures to him. If it wasn't for the landlord, he would forget there was such a thing as rent even—eh? Here's an auld friend."

Martin turned and saw little sparrow-like Jimmy Clarkson, just as he used to be, apparently the same age, wearing (it seemed) the same Ascot tie with the same brass horse-shoe tie-pin. In the lapel of his coat a little tag, with the letters "C.E." up it, twinkled.

"Oh!" He gave astonished welcome. "How are you, Mr. Moir—how are you? Pleased to see you again."

"Ye don't see much change in *him*, do ye?" said Archie, half closing an eye and inclining his head sidewise toward Clarkson.

"Not at all," replied Martin.

"Just the badge," said Archie. "He's got a badge on now. Still in the Y.M.C.A., though, and he's still warned every six months that he will get the sack from here if he isn't careful. And he's still here."

A man Martin did not know came along, hat on back of head in the old "ware'us'" fashion, looked at him, said to Archie: "Oh, I beg your pardon—I see you're engaged." His manner was that of an old employee—yet he must have arrived after Martin's warehouse days.

Archie paid no attention.

"We've still got upstairs," said he to Martin.

"Oh—you still have?"

"Yes. There's no hand-looms up there now, of course. It's just retained for stock. But we still have the top flat and the sign all the way along. Keeps up appearances too."

"Beveridge still here?" asked Martin.

"Beveridge? Oh no, man. He slippit awa'. What was't now, Jimmy?"

"Er—oh, let me see. Stone. Yes, stone."

"Aye—stone. Stone or gravel. Aye, poor fellow! It must be five years ago."

"Six years," said Jimmy. "Yes, six years—stone."

"Is it six? Oh, it may well be."

"Is—er—Watson still here?" asked Martin, with a touch of doubt.

"Aye—he should be in from lunch just now. He's still here."

"And his old assistant, Jenkins?"

"Jenkins? Jenkins? Oh, Jenkins! Eh man, of course—I couldn't think who ye referred to at first. Ye didn't hear about him?"

"No. What about him?"

"Man, he was burnt tae death in the top flat of one of the highest hooses in New York. He left soon after you. Used to come in and see us sometimes. He came over the herrin' pond about once a year—travelling; he wasn't in this line—clocks or something."

"Bicycles," said Jimmy.

"Oh, was it? Aye. Bicycles. So it was."

"Burnt to death?" said Martin, remembering how he had blackened Jenkins's eye, how Jenkins had blackened his, and how they had liked each other.

"Aye, man. Do you remember Nisbet?" asked Archie.

"Yes rather! Is he still here?"

"Man, he went out for a firm trading in West Africa, and got the fever in a week and died."

Martin stood horrified. At the name Nisbet he had smiled. Nisbet had once told him a brief bawdy story that was really funny. The story had flashed back into his head again. And Nisbet was dead!

"I would like to see Charlie MacDougall again," said he. Charlie was so very real in his mind still that of course he must be alive.

"Ye're just over late for that. He slippit awa' last month. Man, he was talkin' about ye the very day he felt the pain and had to go home. 'Be God, Archie,' he

says to me, says he, 'I'm tired, man,' says he. 'I've got to sit down. I simply ha'e to sit down.' Aye, be God, he's deed."

Martin said not a word.

"Pneumonia," said Archie.

"Ah yes," said Jimmy. "Double pneum—yes, yes. Very sad. Still, it is the way of all flesh. Man is but grass."

"Oh shut up, Jimmy! That's nae consolation," snapped Archie. "Awa' and get on wi' yer work! You blither like an auld sweetie-wife. You and your badges! It's fair amazin' the way one is taken and the ither left, as ye micht say. The best seem to go first. It's a wonder Ah'm here maself, keepin' Jimmy company," he said, turning to Martin. "Ah'm losing conceit o' maself. Here's an old friend, though. Now—do ye know who *this* is?"

Martin looked at the newcomer—the newcomer looked at him, saying: "I forget. The face is familiar," and holding out his hand tentatively.

"How are you, Nairn?" asked Martin.

"Mr. Martin! How are you? Well, you've given us a look in at last," and Nairn pump-handled with the "hearty grup."

A packer went by carrying a stack of pieces on his back to make up a bale.

"Is Johns still here?" asked Martin.

"Johns? The packer? No, man! Oh, he made an awful mess of himsel'—drink and hoors, ye ken—an awful man!"

Jimmy, who had not gone away, although ordered to, cleared his throat twice, forcibly.

"Wha are ye hemming and clearing yer throat for, Jimmy?" said Archie, looking round with open mouth at the offender. "Aye man, Johns got full value for his

money – assure you. He died in the Infirmary imagining he was being gnawed by ferrets."

"Rats," said Jimmy.

Archie contented himself with closing one eye, making a wry mouth, and canting his head toward Jimmy without looking at him—a gesture which means a lot in Archie's walk of life. Nairn, looking as if he wished, for the credit of the house, to do a little talking in another vein, came in now.

"We hear great things of you," said he. "We see your name sometimes in accounts of picture exhibitions."

"Aye. Ah have yer drawing of me still, man," said Archie. "It's better than a photo. It's in the best room. It's hanging up on one side of the mantelpiece, and on the ither is a frame programme and menoo-caird of Johnny Anderson's Jubilee Dinner (Johnny Anderson of the Polytechnic, ye ken), where a sang was sung —an adaptation of one of Burns's:

> 'John Anderson, my Jo John,
> When we were first acquent,
> We lived in but a wee hoose
> And little was the rent.'

He began in a wee shop, servin' behind the counter himsel'. The wife put that up. It's the only public dinner we was ever invited to—and we were able to go, ye see, for it wasn't fancy dress. She used to serve in one of his first shops. Ah became acquant with her, passin' the window in the mornin's when she was dressin' it. Aye, yer caracature—as yer faither called it—is in the best room. We sit there on Sundays—Molly and me and the familee, ye ken. Oh, everybody says it's very good —very like me."

"Is——" began Martin, his mind on other matters; but he stuck. He was afraid to ask for others of the staff. "Is—er——"

"Caird?" snapped Archie, looking sharply at him. "Caird is still here—still cashier. We've talked about the wreath for him two or three times—every winter in fact—weak chest, ye ken; cork soles in his boots, ye ken; double front tae his shirt; flannel back to his weskit; cotton in his ears when the wind's in the east—but he hangs on somehow—despite a' they precautions! Come and see if he's in." He grabbed Martin's elbow. "Oh, ye'll see these fellows again," he added, seeing that Martin was turning to say good-bye to Nairn.

He led the way back to the corridor, opened the counting-house door, and thrust his head in.

"Aye, there ye are, Caird!" he said. "There's a young gentleman here tae see the flannel-backit weskit."

"What!" came a bellow from within.

Archie thrust Martin before him.

"Well!" cried Caird. "It's you! I knew you at once. How are you? Look here, Archie—don't you irritate me!" He turned to Martin, explanatory. "Archie has a joke on me because he saw me looking in a boot-shop at some goloshes."

"Was't goloshes? Aye, Ah forgot to tell you about that—goloshes too."

"Go away, go away!" said Caird. "You're a dam liar!" He held up his coat behind. "Is that flannel?" he asked.

Evidently here was some warehouse ragging; and though there were many changes—there were, in another way, none. It was all just as it used to be.

Caird abhorred ragging. He thought it rude and absurd.

"Well, I'll go," said Archie. "Come in and say good-bye before you go, Mr. Martin."

"Yes—I will."

Then Martin chatted with Caird, who set the talk

agoing by saying: "Well, you are revisiting these glimpses of the moon?" But soon he discarded his half-nervous falsetto phraseology and talked from the real self. He still drew in the evenings, after tea. He was still in touch with the exhibitions, the art doings of the city; and with appreciation and sound judgment he talked of Lavery's last, and Newbery's, of Harrington Mann's portraits, of George Henry's "Gold Fish," of Hornel's progress in his own so distinctive manner. A step sounded outside, came into the corridor. The floor quivered. The partition shook. A door slammed.

"That's your father," said Caird. "You see, the corridor there is where the front counter used to be. You remember?" Martin nodded. "We're built up all round. Of course there's that other door still left over there—communicating from his room."

The door in question opened, and Mr. Moir looked out.

"I say, Caird," he began. "Oh hullo! You here, Martin!" He seemed immensely pleased to see his son. Martin wished he had called at the warehouse before this.

"I've rung you up once or twice," said Mr. Moir, "but I could never get any answer."

"I've been out most of the time," said Martin. "I've been down in the Green sketching for a thing I want to do—'Orators' I'm going to call it. It should be good. And I've been down at the Docks a lot."

Mr. Moir noticed a kind of glow on the young man's face.

"You seem to be doing things you are satisfied with," said he.

"We'll see. We'll see," answered Martin. "I think they're not so bad. We're going to have a show. Rathbone is keen on them."

"Of the Rathbone Gallery?" asked Caird.

"Yes. We're going to have a show there."

Mr. Moir wondered, for a moment, what the "we" of these speeches signified—if it was due to a gaily regal feeling over successful work, or was to be taken as a hint that Martin considered his affairs not now in the singular. The last "we" might mean merely the inclusion of Rathbone; but the earlier ones suggested an interior consciousness of being in partnership. A clerk entered at that moment; and Caird, father, and son, fell into talk of the changes at the warehouse, the changes in Glassford Street, Caird glancing now and then at his hat.

"Are you going for lunch now, Mr. Caird?" asked Martin.

"Yes."

"Going home?"

"No. My wife is at Innellan. The house its shut. I lunch in town just now."

"Come and lunch with me, will you?"

"Delighted!" said Caird.

And again Mr. Moir had a look of pleasure. His own instincts were sociable. It pleased him to see his son, too, grown up, not forgetful of Caird who had done much for him—if he only knew. It was good to see things "going well" and everything happy.

"I'll see you later," he said. "I'll ring you up some day soon and fix with you for lunch." He waved his hand and retreated into his private room, because Caird looked suddenly self-conscious—as if he didn't feel that it was quite "the thing" to be going out hobnobbing thus with the boss's son.

Over an hour later Caird came back to the office in a great elation, carrying a flat parcel under his arm.

"Boss in?" he asked the clerk.

"Yes."

He tapped on the door, and when Mr. Moir called "Come!" passed in on dancing tiptoe, gave a mysterious little nod, and began to undo the string of the packet—Mr. Moir looking up at his cashier half blank, half amused, wondering what was afoot. Caird undid the parcel, puzzling Mr. Moir until a Bristol board appeared. At sight of it Mr. Moir jumped to the conclusion that Martin had made a present—and as he came to that conclusion Caird put a drawing on the mantelpiece for admiration.

"A masterpiece!" he breathed. "I told him that it was my favourite of all his work, and"—Caird had to restrain his excitement—"he signed it—look, sir—in the corner—with my name, too! Very charming of him—I do appreciate it! It is my only original. You see he has signed it: 'John Caird, from Martin Moir.' This is my only original. I have been in a studio before, but not the studio of an artist such as Mr. Martin. Success has not spoiled him."

"No, no. Of course he's had a fight too."

"Well, he's a big artist. He's something for Glasgow to be proud of. And he's going further. That's quite clear. Not a bit spoiled. I have never had such a happy day."

Mr. Moir remembered what Caird had said, years ago, not without unexpected emotion, of his own early desire to pursue art; he nodded his head and kept silent, looking on the gift that meant so much to his cashier. He fell into a brow-puckered study, feeling his beard, as Mr. Caird took down the drawing from the mantel again; for it had come into Ebenezer Moir's mind that if Martin's mother would only show a tenth part of such pleasure in her younger son, life would be happier—for himself, for Martin, and for her.

Thoughts of a similar tone were occupying Martin's

mind, alone in the high studio after Caird's departure. He sat sidewise on a chair, arms on the back, looking round his walls at the work that meant so much to him. Caird's appreciation of it sent him back to a subject that he had tried, at various stages of his life, to make taboo for himself, because no good came of brooding upon it. But here it was again. One after the other, occasions of his mother's hostility came tumbling into his mind: of her dispraise, and of her mere apparent disinterest—the latter as painful as the former. He tried to expel them, but the attempt was futile. The subject, dismissed with finality (so he had told himself) when he thrust a letter from her, unread, into the stove of his Chelsea studio, lest it contained some poison, openly administered or wrapped in sweetness, came back as grippingly as ever. He thought of her in a new frame of mind, a frame of mind induced by that refrain of Archie's—"Slippit awa'." She must be growing old, beginning to show her age. Perhaps if he visited her now she would meet him with friendliness and bring the feud to an end.

With furrowed brows he pondered the project of visiting her. But he feared to, at least for the present. If he went at all he would go as a friend, with his heart open; could not bring himself to go to her on guard. And he had had too many experiences of what such an approach meant; he did not feel that he could risk any more attacks in the future, such as he had known, and suffered from, in the past. When his present burst of activity was over, he would reconsider the advisability of opening relations again. For the present he would work. For the present he dared not risk a meeting. If she were not his mother, indeed, he would not consider the matter further; she would be to him as one dead and forgotten.

Looking at his hands, he noticed that one was smeared with grease, probably from the elevator cage (for he had gone down to the street door with Caird), and he drew forth his handkerchief and wiped his hands vigorously. Yes, he would dismiss his mother from his mind again. Inexplicable subject! Why! Even Caird was kindlier than she. Turning about, he caught sight of himself in a convex mirror that, on a side table, leant against the wall. He had but recently bought it, and had not yet decided where to hang it. The studio was reflected in fascinating miniature in its steely and polished surface; and there, moving, he saw himself, astride the chair, in an attitude immediately recalling that portrait of Mariano Fortuny, in the old *Century Magazine* over which he had often pored in Queensholme days. He rose and paced the floor, as if in hope to get away from himself.

"Fortuny died at thirty-six," said he quietly. "Just my age."

And as he walked to and fro he considered how far behind Fortuny he followed! If his mother had not persecuted him so. . . .

"Damn that!" he broke out, speaking to himself aloud. "Damn self-pity!"

He walked over to the windows and leant there, looking out on the leads, the roofs, the telegraph wires, and the sky. Yes, if only his mother was just half as keen as Caird. . . . He thought of his father. What a fine man —what a genuine man! His mother again! There must be some reason for her way of treating him. There must be some explanation; if he only knew what it was, the atrophying effect she had upon him might all be dissipated. He remembered the mother of his early years, she who had nursed him and tended him. Poor woman! Perhaps she did right in her own eyes when

she turned against him so resolutely—perhaps it was all, in so far as her intention went, for his good. She was too old to change. Yes, he would go and see her some day—alone; in the hope that she might be friendly toward him. He must do some work! Time flies. Hours, like lives, slip away.

No, he could not work. He could not work to-day, Amy being gone. He hoped she was all right. There were such things as train accidents. He would go and have tea, then come back, light up all the lights, and get on with the etching of "The Orators." That would keep him unaware of slow time till Amy came—and he would find then that time had flown. He washed preparatory to going out, and laughed to himself as he washed, recalling Wilson's Song for Time of Ablution:

> "It was there by faith I received my sight,
> And now I am happy all the day."

Great man, Wilson! Wilson was in Spain, had written from Seville; he would be back in Glasgow in another month.

He descended to the rattle and buzz of the city, strolled down Buchanan Street, a quiet street underfoot at this end, easier on the ear-drums than it is at the top of the hill where the lorries rattle over stone in the region of Saint Rollox; timed his watch at Edwards' clock—with "Greenwich Time" written above it. A faint, red, afternoon fog was coming over the city. It stained the white casement curtains in a tea-shop of Buchanan Street, and, as he noticed that delicate stain upon them, like an atmospheric dye, it struck him that he saw it wonderfully well. This "colour-blindness" of his was a mighty subtle "blindness." If his mother had discredited the truth of it and thought that he lied for ulterior ends, he could hardly blame her. He had diffi-

culty at times—such times as this—in believing in it himself. Indeed so might we, were it not for all the proofs—Marks's, the oculist's, that of the "scarlet on drab" wincey, or was it "drab on scarlet" that they called that meaningless hue? Though, if you note, all his pictures are low tone; he created (so far as brush-work goes) a quiet minor world of greys and silvers, browns and old golds. It is his pen and inks, dry points, and etchings that suggest to us, in their black-and-white, a blaze of colour. At any rate, seeing that evanescent red in the white casement curtains of this dainty afternoon-tea shop, he felt that he could well forgive Mrs. Moir for her suspicions regarding his veracity in the matter of the scarlet thread that evaded him. . . .

"Hullo! Mr. Moir!" a voice broke in on his wandering and musing. He turned, to see dapper and rosy Robarts of the jeweller's shop in Sauchiehall Street.

"Mr. Robarts!" he ejaculated. They shook hands warmly.

"Come and have one for old times' sake," said Robarts. "I allow myself one during the day, and I haven't had it yet."

So they turned the corner and passed into the Bodega, where Robarts ordered *one* each, and sipped his slowly, as behooved a "puffick gentleman." Robarts gave Martin all the gossip of the jeweller's shop—how White, the head polisher, was still there, but was now dropping hints that in civilian life, as well as in military, pensions were sometimes given. "And he'll get it, too. Old Chambers is just as good as ever that way." The others were all there. It was a relief to hear that in one house, at least, none had "slippit awa'." But Robarts could not tarry long; he was out on business, upon an errand to a wholesale leather house to see about a new stock of chamois leathers.

"I never hear of chamois leathers," said Martin, "without remembering Chambers & Denny."

"And Spears," said Robarts.

"Yes."

"Yes. He tried to make you have a bad time. I suppose you bear him no ill-will?"

"No—none. It's an old story now."

"Aye, man—an old song. I find that myself sometimes. A man will do me an injury, and I say to myself: 'Let him wait and see!' But it's all over presently. When I see him again it's forgotten."

"Quite—quite," and Martin went off into a moody stare, wondering if he should go out to Bearsden, find the new house, and say to his mother: "Can't we let bygones be bygones?"

"Life's short, man," said Robarts.

"Short indeed. Have another?"

"Well—I allow myself *one* during the day. However—it's not every day that we meet old friends. And after all a 'nip' is only a 'haufy.' How is your father?"

"Very well, thanks."

"Fine man! A fine man! Often remember him. God's gentleman, your father. The real MacKay! Well, here's my respects and best wishes."

But that "one" over, he had to go, presenting his card, noting Martin's address (for Moir lacked cards) and promising to call.

"It will be very interesting to me, apart from the pleasure of seeing you again," said Robarts. "I have never been in an artist's workshop."

"Not in Wilson's?"

"No, man—not even in Wilson's. He's beyond monograms for Chambers & Denny now. Ever hear from him?"

"I had a letter last week. He's on the Continent."

"He deserves it. He had some hard times, I believe —though he didn't show it. Remember me to him when you write."

"You'll look up?"

"I'll look up."

Robarts shook hands, saluted, and strutted off in the growing red fog. Martin turned away and nearly collided with the rear rank of the little knot of young men that looked in at the illustrated weekly magazines displayed in the window of the news-agent's shop next door to the Bodega, a bright golden cave in the twilight. How far off seemed the days when he used to stand looking in these windows! Did he crane wide-eyed and open-mouthed, he wondered, as these boys in the group did now?

He strolled on past the Royal Exchange to Ingram Street, and onwards to the farther tea-room—the ancient one, still there, he thanked God, not yet slippit awa'. He descended joyously on the soft carpet, and took a corner seat, the old seat, and feasted his eyes (with something like thanksgiving!) upon the little blue bowls of sugar, white and brown sugar. He would like to bring Amy here one day, just to show her the place, if it did not seem too egotistical. The waiter, of whom he ordered Russian tea and cigarettes for old-time's sake, was not the old-time waiter. The Russian tea was relishable as ever, but evidently he had grown beyond a cigarette. Two puffs sufficed, and he pressed it out upon the ash-tray, lit his pipe, and sat there meditating, not brooding. He ordered another glass of Russian tea for shame's sake, sitting there so long. He had not spent a day without Amy since—since he could not remember when. It seemed he had known her for ages. He fell in love with her afresh, and deeper. He must try to make an etching of her again. His attempts to portray her never

satisfied him. How could he portray her? She is, of course, in his dry-point known as "The White Fur Lining," which satisfies its possessors, though it did not satisfy Martin Moir.

Then he considered, self-censuring, how remiss he had been in interest in his father's affairs, he who so keenly felt the mother's disinterest in his own. By Jove, the Glassford Street premises had shrunk! The old man must feel it. Happy thought! He would go round and take the old man out to dinner. He would invite him to F. & F.'s for old-time's sake. F. & F.'s, to Ebenezer Moir, J.P., meant "doing one proud!" He rang up on the 'phone instead of going in again. Yes—his father would come. "Delighted, my boy—delighted. I shall be there at six." But as Martin replaced the receiver and turned away he told himself that if Amy had not been away he would have been less eager to dine with the old man, and so delight him. "Delighted, my boy—delighted," rang in his ears, spoken with such feeling that he was touched.

"Queer beasts we are," thought he. "Here am I—a grown man—miserable because my mother will not accord her smile, and she never gave a damn! And there I go forgetting my father who has given"—he smiled to himself—"a great many damns to make up for the one he didn't give originally, bless him."

He must have spoken to himself—or else looked abstracted to a marked degree. Passers-by, turning to look at him, recalled him to the fact that he was in the street, in George Square, before the post office where he had telephoned. With less absent mien, but still revolving his thoughts, between brooding and meditation, he considered how, in the hackneyed adage, the iron had entered and how, though he had learnt much since his dreaming hobbledehoy days, he had lost one gift, or

capacity, the capacity to find a sanctuary in loneliness. He must be working, or he must be with other human beings. He looked back on the old days of long, lonely rambles on the moors beyond Mearns, days of loafings and loiterings in his "forest ground called Thessaly" around Giffnock Quarries. Put him there alone now, thought he, and there would be little of happy kingdom for him. "My mind to me a kingdom is" would be a vain boast. His mother's face would come in, like the face of a haunting ghost. Phrases of hers would come back out of conversations and letters, a linked belt of them like machine-gun cartridges—and he would be riddled.

He went into Queen Street Station and watched the traffic awhile, all the coming and going, by thousands, of types—high-level lives, low-level lives. He saw postmen tossing mail-bags into vans, porters trundling trolleys, people irascible over baggage—as if yearning to be pilloried in quick charcoal sketches after the manner of Belcher; people with empty faces, bored by waiting for other people who did not arrive, killing time by buying pennyworths of chocolates or caramels from the automatic machines. He considered the powerful locomotives that can now haul any train through the precipitous tunnel without aid of the wire-rope that used to help them only a few years ago, thrashing and straining all the way to Cowlairs. He watched the pageant pass by, the pageant of every day. Pomposity went past with backward cant, heralding stomach, hands swinging half clenched, thumb thrust out in the direction of travel. Curly-haired "commercials" in a group exchanged the last bawdy story. One of them laughed high and piping, and slapped the platform with a foot after each jest, tee-heeing. A dignified one stood with hand on hip, left leg advanced, weight on right foot,

head turned half away from his friends to give them his profile, clearly conceited about it, neck thrust back into collar, eyes roving after the women who went by. A great figure! one that, at the adroit flip of any petticoat, would perform all manner of ludicrous tricks. There were individuals too, by the score, as well as such clear "types."

At the newspaper stall he caught sight of a young man that he had met once at Wilson's studio, the lean young man whom Wilson had called a "dam literary man," in friendly altercation; he was wandering before the display of the stall, pensively, like one looking for something he could not find. He might have been murmuring to himself T. E. Brown's *Exile*, to hazard a guess by his expression. The "Look out! Look out!" of a passing porter pushing a trolley loaded with luggage distracted Martin for a moment, to save his heels, and when he looked back to the stall the young man (whose nose, it had just occurred to him, was like Stevenson's, and the (then) pope's, and Phil May's) had vanished abruptly from the scene.

Martin, past master in the art (an art that was second nature to him), observed without staring, observed and filed away, in the dark room behind his eyes, many plates. Suddenly up sizzled the electric lights, and a blue gauze of radiance was flung over the platforms and the crowds. It recalled him to the passage of time, out of his great diversion; and he went forth to the street to find that twilight had fallen, and to remember (at the shock of seeing this proof of how time flew) Rastignac in Paris; for the change of light seemed always to take Rastignac unawares. "Name of God! It is only five hours, and the light fades!" Martin could hear the words as if spoken just now.

He hastened to the restaurant, and arrived there as

his father appeared, large and loose, slowly crossing the street. They approached the evening before them leisurely, washing and refreshing, choosing a table with easy deliberation. Evidently Mr. Moir had dismissed all troubles and looked forward to a restful and quiet chat.

"Caird is charmed, my boy, charmed," he said, as they sat down. "You don't mind me, Martin—it's pride, not proprietorship. He is off his head—in the seventh heaven. He is really a judge of art too, is he not?"

"Oh, he knows."

"Well, he brought in that drawing you gave him as if it was the sacred vessels, and put it on my mantel to show me, as if my mantel was an altar! You've made him very happy. He had to quote a tag over it, of course." Mr. Moir smiled over his cashier's habit of tags. "'This,' said he, 'is beyond the dreams of avarice.' Soup? Yes. Thick? Thick. Yes."

He took a roll offered to him, spread the napkin afresh, and said:

"What was I going to ask you? Oh yes. How is Miss Alexander?"

"Very well. She's gone to Loch Lomond to-day to see her old governess. We're going to be married before Christmas."

Mr. Moir looked at his son, thoughtfully, without any sign of startlement, and then held out his hand.

"She's a fine girl," he said.

Martin was immensely interested in the undemonstrative way that his father took the news. The old man stretched his legs anew under the table, napkined his lips, and then, with a little wag of his head, smiled.

"I may tell you now," said he, "that after I left you last time I went back to the ware'us' saying to myself"—his mouth twisted humorously—"the words of a song

I've heard the message-boys singing and whistling past my windows: 'Why don't you marry the girl?' I like her very much, Martin, very much. She is a fine lass," and when Ebenezer Moir dropped into Scots thus he always felt deeply what he said.

Of his own domestic affairs there was not a word, either over the dinner, or over the coffee that followed; and at about eight o'clock they went up to Queen Street Station, where Martin saw his father off, feeling very proud of him, and returned to his studio, happily affected by the old man's large and easy tolerance. He sat down and wrote a long letter to John, and went out and posted it at the General Post Office, instead of at the corner pillar-box, to kill time till Amy should return and, as well, because of the lure of the streets, lamp lit, and with grey pavements to-night instead of sticky. The diminishing traffic seemed to be making a kind of orchestration. The music was oddly haunting. He returned to the studio leisurely. A scaffolding was up round the Athenæum corner, and he stood across the street there for some time, memorising the lines of the timbers, the inner bulk of building, the lines of light and parallelograms of blackness. Then back to the studio.

It grew quiet. Sitting in the ante-room he could hear, coming down his stove-pipe, the ceaseless hum of the telegraph wires on the roof—on and on. He passed into the big studio, lighting up there, and looked over portfolios and rearranged pictures, took some out of frames and put new ones in, wondered if Amy would stay overnight at Loch Lomond or send a "wire" as she had said she would if—— A bell rang once, then rang twice in quick succession, and then again, a single short ring.

It was Amy's signal. It was arranged that she should ring the elevator bell thus on her return, not that there

was anyone at the elevator—for after six the cage was locked—but because the stairs were dark, all the offices being shut. Martin hastened down to meet her, carrying a candle in a brass candlestick, souvenir of Parisian potterings in the bric-à-brac shops. A wind had arisen. That was doubtless why the wires sang so. It had blown out one of the gas-lights on the stairs; he stretched to re-light it, and evidently the candle had not been securely thrust in the candlestick. Down it fell, and was extinguished. In the sudden darkness, on the stairs that echoed with a faint hum of the city's activities, he felt suddenly adread, like a child afraid in the dark. It was a terrifying sensation for a moment—like a dream about being buried alive. Too much Russian tea to-day, perhaps! He stretched up, felt for the tap, turned off the gas, then groped down, patting and fumbling, for the candle, found it, lit it, wedged it securely into the candlestick, and descended to meet Amy.

"How white you are, Martin!" she cried. "Something wrong?"

"Nothing! By Jove! I *am* glad to see you again. How is Mademoiselle?"

"Wonderful. Poor old soul, she is failing—but she has got over this last illness. What have you been up to, dear?"

"I've been tidying up while you were away."

"Not working?"

"No." He shook his head. "Missed you too much. Oh, I had supper with dad; had tea before that on my lonesome, and this morning trotted down to the warehouse. My God, I am glad to see you again, Amy."

"You'll always have me," she assured him, looking glad to get back. "And I'm so glad you missed me."

"It's been rotten without you."

"I'm so glad!"

Martin laughed—and turned on all the lights.

"So Mademoiselle is better?"

"Yes. But she's growing old. It is inevitable, of course; but I shall be very, very sorry. I told her about you, Martin. She is fond of me, you know. She said she had been wondering."

"I told my father to-day."

"You did! What did he say?"

"He just shook hands with me and said: 'She's a fine lass.' It came right from under his fifth rib. I wonder——" He hesitated.

"Wonder what?"

"If I could bring my mother round to hear of it. I'll think it over—I'll think it over. I would like to be on decent terms with her, but—— Never mind, we won't talk of that."

"You can, if you wish. I have always guessed, of course, that something was wrong. But——"

"No; we won't discuss it."

"Let's dismiss it then, Martin. Look. I've something for you. It will make you happy. Mademoiselle has had it for a long time. She got it for Francis. She's had it ever since, and when I told her about you she said you must have it. Look——" And she opened a parcel with something of that air of "See what I have here!" with which Caird, that day, had opened his treasure in Mr. Moir's room. She handed over a volume—Davillier's *Fortuny, Sa Vie, Son Œuvre.*

"Oh!" He quietly whooped at it—and the burden of *his* heart rolled away. "I've often wanted to get this. It's been out of print for years. That Yriarte's *Fortuny* is the only book on him I have. What a dear old dame she must be! You must write and thank her again—

from me. Is she hard up? Can we do anything for her?"

He turned the pages, looking at the reproductions, and suddenly: "Oh, I say! Listen to this!" he ejaculated: "A letter to Simonetti. 'Je ne prétends pas, écrivait-il, te faire ces observations comme ton maître; mais je prie de les recevoir comme ami——' and then the Spanish. Oh yes—I see. Well, here is data for our Simonetti and Fortuny story about the old model. What a decent way of Fortuny to write to him!"

Mr. Moir, in the house beyond Maryhill, on the Bearsden Road, was making his attempt to preface the way for an end to the animosity toward Martin. He would not tell Rachel at once that the boy was going to be married. He would lead the way to that announcement, lure her interest. It would be "nice," he thought, for her to say: "And how is he getting on? What is his news?"

"Martin came into the ware'us' to-day," he began, and felt for his pipe and filled it; but she did not take advantage of the pause even with an ejaculation of interest. Her lips tightened, her under jaw thrust out slightly, her eyes—they showed as if the little slumbering fires in them had been fanned into flame! Mr. Moir was not looking at her; he was filling his pipe with studied ease, trying to approach a subject of discord gently. "And spent a little while talking to the boys—a friendly call," he added.

Mrs. Moir smiled dryly. So Ebenezer had been again unable to maintain his silence! He had had to speak—he who had thought to snub her when she mentioned Martin! Her husband looked at her doubtfully, and tapped upon his teeth with the mouthpiece of his pipe

—much in the way that he was wont to drub out a tune on the table with his fingers when trying to settle some pettily irritating matter without show of annoyance.

"He's a fine fellow," he went on. "He took Caird up to his studio,"—he lit a match, and puffed vigorously,—"took him round, and gave him a present of the drawing that Caird most admired. He was charmed—charmed—I've never known him so delighted. Martin signed it for him. It was very nice of the boy."

"I suppose it was," she answered coldly. "But I should have thought his father and mother would come before strangers."

The pipe did not draw. Mr. Moir hit the bowl vigorously on the palm of his hand.

"Gad!" said he. "I won't let him give me one unless he allows me to pay for it, and so there we are!"

"He might have sent one to his mother," she said, in the voice of one woefully ill-treated.

Mr. Moir evidently did not know "how to manage a woman."

"Oh, damn!" he said, and flung out of the room, leaving her to weep tears for herself, cursed (so she moaned) by her husband and her son; and, drying them, to tell herself that if that was to be the attitude assumed toward her, she would be victor again in the next phase of the feud.

"I have been wounded," she quoted to herself from Holy Writ, "I have been wounded in the house of my friends."

CHAPTER VIII

THAT night, for the first time in their married life, Mrs. Moir went upstairs bedward without first saying good-night to her husband. True, there had for long been much of mere usage about this good-night; but the omission of it, even though the performance had been at times perfunctory, showed clearly that Mrs. Moir had been wronged and awaited apology. In the morning she did not see Ebenezer, though she came down to breakfast (with the air of an angry martyr) so that he might have opportunity to express his sorrow. The maid, with expressionless face, informed her that Mr. Moir was already gone to business. "He was up early, ma'am, and I gave him a cup of chocolate, as he wanted to catch the train before his usual."

There was a meaningful tightening of Rachel's lips then. She walked to the window and looked out a long time, hardening her heart, and pitying herself that her husband could go to business without giving her good morning. She had heard him, up, and moving early, and had imagined he was gone into the garden to consider the advisability of expressing regret for his outbreak. As she looked out upon the road, her well-modelled lower jaw protruding grimly, thumb and forefinger fussing and fussing with a slender watch-chain, her mind was diverted slightly from her own woes by the passing by of a file of reformatory girls, laughing and happy. Poor little children, poor little orphans! How terrible to know no mother-love! Her eyes moistened as she watched them go past. They filed by, rosy and gay, on the frosty road.

"How sad they look," she pondered. "How tragic."

The sounds of their feet and their laughter died away; and in the other direction came a lumbering 'bus of the kind that had long ago plied in the city, was now to be found only beyond the suburbs—and would soon vanish thence too, harried by the motor-car from the country roads as it had been chivvied from the city by electric cars. How worn the horses were! How they slipped on the frosty road! Lady Sporran was quite right: men *were* selfish. Two golfers sat on the top. Well, yes—they were climbing down now, after looking at the horses. That was good. Their hearts had been touched, but she feared they were of the minority. There were one or two old ladies inside; but they were to be pardoned: they could not be expected to walk. They were women, and they were old. She must speak to Mr. Moir about this 'bus. If he wrote to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals they might send a cart of gravel to strew on the hill on frosty days.

There was, indeed, much to be done to make the world better. She looked through the morning paper, seeking for distress. There were no flagrant disasters at home to report that day, so the sub-editors had had to go abroad to provide her with what she required. An excursion train in a siding in Michigan, U.S.A., had been dashed into by a main-line express; there had been an explosion of dynamite in Moscow, and many Russians had been killed. That had to serve to-day, there being no home accidents of any magnitude to report up to the time of going to press. Nobody that she knew was named in the Death Columns. It was an arid morning all round.

She decided to go shopping and to lunch in town. In the afternoon she must go, according to promise, to hear a Russian refugee, called (if she had the name rightly) Stockingsoff, give an account of the Siberian prisons.

She rang for the girl, and told her to go over to the farm and order the dog-cart. And half an hour later, hard and handsome, a typical Sinclair of Colintrae, she departed for her day of good deeds, and to afternoon teas.

She did not return home till after dinner, when the maid informed her that Mr. Moir had already dined, had asked for her, and was gone out for a walk. She ate dinner alone, considering the while that he was at least troubled about her sufficiently to wish to know where she was.

Indeed he was troubled; he was troubled over many things—business and domestic. All day he had been forced to attend to the former. Now, it being a clear evening with sharp air tempting to pedestrian exercise, and with starlight, he had taken his ash stick and was off for a walk, striding along the hard ways, vigorous almost as a boy, relishing the tingle in his cheeks, that rejuvenated him, made him feel that he was not ageing. Deep breathing, he swung along. But his worries came into the walk.

It seemed impossible—this strained condition of affairs at home. Had she no memory? Could she not recall old days that they had known and lived together? He still cared for her; and because she was a woman—and because she was the mother of his boys—and because he had known the deepest physical intimacy that can be between man and woman—he was numbed by her everlasting air of not desiring friendliness. He felt his hands tied. He could not rail at her; and he was clearly no diplomatist. In all his dealings with her he was baulked. He had, in the phrase of Holy Scriptures, lain with this woman, and she had conceived, and begat him sons, and lo, here, in their elderly years, they were estranged, most coldly estranged. The thought wounded him with a dull, deep wound.

Perhaps he had been wrong to treat her as he did over the London incident. Perhaps he should have talked quietly to her about it, and she would have seen. Perhaps he had been wrong. . . . He emitted a sigh of weariness as he tramped, his breath coming frostily. Perhaps he had walked far enough. A little country inn twinkled at him, and he did an unprecedented thing—went into it, stooping under the low door. Yokels, who were in the flagged tap-room at the time, fell silent in awe at his appearance. He tossed off a brandy and departed. In his younger days he would have spent longer time there, would have got into talk with the yokels, stood a glass all round. Now he seemed to bring awe into the place. Yet when he came out again into the crisp air and started homeward he felt better, for, though he had broken the spell, there was a sense of *camaraderie* in the inn, and he had tapped it. As soon as he came indoors, in his home again, he felt that life was not joyous. His wife followed him into his den, where he was putting on his slippers.

"Good-night, Ben," she said quietly.

"You are off to bed!"

"Yes—I'm tired. I've had a long day."

"I haven't seen you all day."

"I heard you get up this morning. I thought you had gone out into the garden before breakfast. I was astonished to hear that you were off to town when I came down."

"Rachel," he said suddenly, and looked up at her, pulling on his second slipper, finger behind heel.

"Yes?"

"It is three years since you last gave me a good-night kiss," said he—and felt somewhat foolish as soon as he had spoken.

Her mouth opened, for a moment. There was a tremor in her veins. He rose and came toward her.

"I would like to be on happier terms with you," he said.

She stepped back.

"You've been drinking brandy!" she cried. "You surely would not kiss me with that odour on your mouth?"

He undid it all. He knew what misery lurking in his heart had suggested brandy as antidote; and that she recoiled from him thus helped him to feel how greatly meshed he was, how much hemmed round and handicapped—even by his own desire to go easily with her. "Rachel," he said, "what is—what in the Name of God, what in the Name of God I ask you—is the matter?"

"You know yourself," she replied. He looked in her eyes and thought they held something of dementia.

"It is Martin," he said, "that has held us apart, whether that is what you mean or not. That is the trouble. Now Martin should be a pride to you. It beats me. I can't understand it. I admit that I was hard when you came back from London. No—not hard! I was just. I was justly irritated. I kept my tongue over it only because I was not a big enough man to talk to you quietly about it. I was too much angered—vexed. I did not want to overdo it. Oh!" he broke out, "how petty this all is! That's three years ago, woman, three years ago!"

"It was you who chose to make him a banned subject," said she.

"Yes, yes—I know. I know, and I've just been telling you why. I thought you might change your attitude. I did my best, woman. Rachel—can we not end this? He is going to be married and I should like to know that——"

"Married!" she cried, and her eyes narrowed and that set and stony look he knew so well came to her face. "And does the girl who is going to marry him know about his behaviour with his"— she paused— "model!" she said coldly.

He stared at her.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Oh," she replied, and very stately she was, "you may have chosen to keep me in the dark about Martin. And he has chosen to ignore me. But I am a determined woman——"

"I thought you were a *loving mother,*" he interrupted, accentuating the last words, her own words, from former protestations, given back to her now.

"I have heard about him," said she. "And what I have heard is not pleasant. He has little respect for your name to behave the way he does with his"— another pause—"model!"

"Rachel! Rachel! Are you mad? What gossip is this you have listened to and nursed to yourself— remember what Bobby Burns says, Rachel—'nursing your wrath to keep it warm' "—and he tried to put a gentleness into his voice, as though to coax her to sweetness—"instead of shoving it down the throat of whoever——"

"It is not gossip!" she said indignantly.

He marked the hard look again and felt how hopeless was the attempt to coax her toward sweetness. He lost his own calm. He was angry. But he still had great control of gesture and voice.

"No—you are right, I was wrong. It is not gossip. Gossip is kindlier. This is scandal. I don't know who has been scandal-mongering to you—but I can see how it has arisen; for the woman he is going to marry—

listen, and be ashamed of yourself—is the woman he has been using as a model."

She stared now. She drew erect.

"*My* son!" She cried, quivering. "*My* son marrying a model!"

"Oh—*your* son! Do ye know, Rachel"—he spoke very quietly—"that I would hate ye if I didn't think ye were crazy—crazy with your Eugenists and your Woman's Emancipation, and *your* Christianity. You a Eugenist! You a Christian! I heard something about you the other day—quite accidentally. I may tell you, seeing that tittle-tattle is the order of the day. I had to go to see about my eyes. I went to Earle—old Earle's son. There was an etching by Martin hanging in the young man's consulting room." He paused. "Does that please you? Good God, woman! *Your* son. Do ye find nothing in that to please you? If you had walked into a strange house and saw—but that is not the point. I remarked upon it being by my son, and young Earle said he is a great admirer of Martin's work. Now listen, my good woman—I saw the old man when I was coming out, and the young man introduced us—over the head of that etching—and I passed a jest with the old man about the colour-blind artists. I was sorry afterwards, for I only saw afterwards that I was making public what some people might use as a sneer if they wanted to be nasty about his work. Old Earle remembered Martin coming to him, and he remembered more."

Mr. Moir stopped, but his wife stood expressionless.

"Have I to go on?" he asked. "Very well. He didn't see what he was telling me, but what he said was: 'He was a bit of a rogue, was he not? I remember his mother came back next day to ask me if I didn't think perhaps the boy had pretended not to see some shades so as to get out of his father's business. A bit of a

young rogue! Well, he wasn't a rogue that time. I am glad to know that he has come on as he has. It's all very interesting,' said he. Now! What kind of a mother was that?"

Mrs. Moir shook her head, as one dealing with an idiot.

"If that was not interest in the boy I don't know what was," said she. "And if you don't think it was interest, but something else—then who are you to impute scandal to me?"

Mr. Moir looked at her for a moment with mouth working as if it were of elastic, then raised his head and laughed a mirthless laugh.

"By God!" he cried, "that's the nearest I've ever heard you arrive at an argument in your life. Oh well, go to bed—go to bed. It's no use."

"Would you," she asked, "have spoken to Jessie Ray that way if you had married her?"

As he stared at her, bereft of speech, she went from the room. A long time later, having considered her speech, and all that it signified, the cold, grim light (as it were) it cast upon her attitude of these long years, he thought to go up and talk quietly to her—talk her out of her madness. "I might lose my temper. I might kill her," said he to himself, and poured a glass of whisky, a full glass, then shook his head at it and said: "No, no—not to-night!" opened his window, and tossed the contents out into the garden.

Next morning Mrs. Moir did not come down to breakfast; and Mr. Moir, who had slept none all night, tapped at her door. She heard, but did not answer. It was her opinion that he was worried, about her—and she would give him a little longer to worry. He came in and looked at her, saw that her eyes were shut, presumed that she still slept, so departed.

Martin rang him up early (about ten-thirty) to see if he would join Amy and him at lunch. The father came (delighted), determined to be father and mother to them. After lunch he accompanied them to the studio, and was wonderfully cheery, more than wontedly so. He had the air of a man "with a card up his sleeve" as he swung along with them, smiling to himself and to the world.

"Now," he said when they entered the studio, "Martin, get your major-domo to bring in some of his coffee."

And when the coffee arrived, and the odour of it called him from his wanderings round the walls—he never grew tired of that journey—said he, rubbing his hands: "Now Amy—now Amy, for I must call you Amy—you pour a cup for us"; and down he sat, and thrust his hand into his breast pocket. "Five years ago, my dear," and he inclined his head to her, "Martin asked me to stop sending him any cash. He wanted to be self-supporting, and he told me that he found saving hard, and that he would just spend all he got in, whether it was much or little; so I wasn't to send. Well, five years is two-sixty weeks—and he had thirty shillings a week from me before that. Here it is now—arrears, and £10 for interest to make it even figures. It will come in useful." The two merely glanced at him in admiration. "I want to do something. Let me," said he, waving a hand at them. "Things might be happier one way and another. Money is not everything, but money is handy, and—well, well, there you are! It won't atone for things, but——" he nodded to Martin.

Amy saw that Martin wanted to speak to his father but would not, before her, for the old man's sake. She ran off to the studio as if in search of something, and there delayed.

"Dad," and Martin leant to his father, "I sat up half

last night wondering—would it do any good to come out and see mother?''

Mr. Moir's jaw thrust out, and he held chin in hand and fingered it, clutching and clutching.

''This is hard, my boy—this is hard,'' said he. And very carefully he began to tell his son of his discovery of the night before—a discovery that only his density in petty views had caused to be made so late. It was a difficult narration. But he could not get far. What seemed to him like a sense of decency prevented him. Also it was all too painful for Martin to listen to. He heard enough. He knew that it was a jealousy, brooded over through years, that had worked against him—and against his father. But when Mr. Moir's talk began to have a hint as of protesting that the thing was absurd, that ''this lass,'' as he called Jessie Ray, had been nothing to him *that way,* that in his young days—''when I was just a lad, man, Martin,''—then, at that stage, Martin could allow him to proceed no further.

''No more, dad, no more,'' he said definitely.

''Man, it's only justice to you that I should get the story into your ears somehow,'' said the father, glaring at the floor, taking out a handkerchief and rubbing his face.

''Well, dad, it's a load off me. I've been developing into something of a monomaniac—not so much because of the cul-de-sac of it all in itself, as because there seems no sense to it.''

It was then Mr. Moir laughed.

''You see no sense to it yet,'' said he, ''but it's always something to be grateful for if you can see the nonsense of a thing.'' And after the laugh, which ended abruptly, he looked the saddest man imaginable. Martin, the ordeal over, found himself wondering who ''this lass'' was. She had ''been a painter, an artist, and I suppose

(though it seems petty) that was one of your mother's troubles when you took to sketching''; so his father had said. But Martin did not ask. The subject was closed—the name had not slipped out. He recalled—but speedily dismissed, in a kind of modesty—some words, probably significant, dropped by Mrs. Harringway at Chelsea.

''I'll go, my boy—I'll go,'' said Mr. Moir. It was understandable that, after such a talk, Mr. Moir would not wish to stay; but would desire to go away, and come back soon, to begin afresh, as if this conversation had not been. ''Where's Amy? I'm off, Amy! Bless you, my lass. Ring me up again when you feel inclined for a lunch, Martin. Have you fixed the date yet?''

''It's to be after the Clyde etchings are ready—all finished and sent to Mr. Rathbone,'' said she. ''And then,'' her voice changed, ''Mr. Martin Moir will be at the gallery with——''

''With his wife,'' said Martin.

''Fine, fine! Very good. God bless you!''

CHAPTER IX

Ebenezer Moir coined a phrase about this period and passed it into his currency—"I am astonished at nothing." Another of his phrases was: "Seems impossible? It will likely happen then"; but even that he was wont to say with a laugh.

It was Mrs. Moir's way, after each fresh eruption of their smouldering volcano, to perform many "little actions" as she called them. These little actions consisted of such kindnesses as placing, on cold nights, Mr. Moir's slippers to warm atilt on the grate. None could say, she would reflect, that she did not do her duty as a wife; none could say that her heart was not full of good deeds, or that she forgot the many "little things" that testify to a good wife. And, incidentally, the phrase from Scripture would occur to her regarding the heaping of coals of fire upon heads.

On days that he had been as she considered cruelly distant she would, with her own hands, change the blotting-paper in his blotting-pad instead of giving orders to the housemaid to do so; and her eyes, while employed upon such "little actions," were full of pity for herself—that one so devoted should be so cruelly treated. She put Ebenezer in many a quandary. Though he was not the kind of man to lay great stress upon the kind of connubial bliss implied in warm slippers, he would take these things as indication of what he called "coming round," would speak to her more pleasantly, reciprocating the "coming round," hoping to arrive eventually at a peaceful understanding, at an end of

the many "small attritions." The "small attritions" were, in this case, at any rate, not the disease—only an outer evidence, as a rash is of some fevers. And no sooner did he act so than her frigidity would increase. He could not "make her out." He felt as a man may feel who, introduced to someone, imagines that hands are to be shaken—that the other person's hand was extended—and extends his own, only to be stared at with the look that implies: "In the society in which I move we only bow."

Baffled, he would again retire behind his breastwork of reticence, telling himself that doubtless there were two points of view to every trouble, and that perhaps it was even in some way dishonourable of him to take what seemed like a return of sweetness in her as an opportunity to influence her to do what he wanted. What he wanted from her was a spontaneous, happy desire for the old friendship with him. As Martin was the core of their trouble, he would have been glad beyond words to hear her say: "I have written to Martin asking him to come to the house, saying that we can let bygones be bygones now, and that I am sure that whatever was wrong between us long ago can be forgotten." To attempt coercion in matters of the heart he saw as absurd; indeed coercion, to Ebenezer Moir, the older he grew the more strongly he felt so, was a doubtful word. He awaited the better day, but there were so many false dawns that if the genuine dawn ever came he might not believe in it, think it was just another fooling of Hope.

To us, looking on, it seems (perhaps) inconceivable that such a state of affairs could drag on. And yet it is just such impossible situations that do drag on. He did not care to invite his friends to the house. He felt that even those friends they had in common must remark

the growing distance between them and feel unpleasant on visiting them. When such friends did call it was he who seemed morose. His wife hid their estrangement. He lacked dissembling skill. But their friends became fewer. Old friends they had had in common dropped away, and new friendships were not made—friendships, that is, common to both. For Mrs. Moir enlarged the circle of her personal acquaintance. As for his own especial friends—he entertained them at his club, of which he came to be more and more a habitué. He had a subscription at a circulating library that provided him with nepenthes, seeing he had not the heart for drastic cures nor the patience for slow ones. Working hard in Glassford Street he found ease and forgetfulness in the works of Savage and of Gunter, for conchology and philately were insufficient. When the library assistant "put him on to" Stanley Weyman, he felt that he must give that young man a Christmas box when Christmas came—perhaps a box of cigars, lest he be insulted with money. For *The Gentleman of France* wrapped him away from the world, and in *The Castle Inn* he found a pleasant sanctuary in which to forget his troubles, the "small attritions." But when he came the length of Stevenson's *Master of Ballantræ* he used the word "genius." This man *knew*. The baiting of Mr. Henry by the Master was to him (as to others even, with wider knowledge of fiction) one of the biggest pieces of work imaginable. If this book did not wrap him away from his own case, as did the others, it enlarged his heart somehow, as if someone had said, someone worth listening to: "Don't you worry, Moir, I understand!"

As for Mrs. Moir and books—the only book I ever heard her talk about with deep interest was one much advertised in the pulpits, a wild book about a higher

critic who had a mistress, a higher critic who tried to prove that the story of Christ was a myth. According to this story many believed the higher critic—and the result seemed to be, chiefly, that no woman's "honour" was safe. Then the higher critic was shown to be a liar and all the incestuous men went home again and got into their Sunday clothes. That, at least, was the exciting impression the book conveyed to Mrs. Moir and the ladies with whom she discussed it—seriously—an inconceivable discussion to some, perhaps, but actual nevertheless. As Mr. Moir might have said: "Seems impossible? Just what happens!"

Lady Sporran lent her, as the fashions changed, a volume by Nietzsche, then a volume by Bergson, telling her that Nietzsche was dethroned; and (at the date of this chapter) a book by Butler; but though these lay a decent while on her drawing-room table I do not think they were (in any decent sense of the word) *read.* They were returned with thanks, and melting-eyed regret, that "A woman such as I, with so many domestic duties, can really not find time to read such books as thoroughly as they deserve. I don't know what you will think of me, but when I do read nowadays, I like something distracting—just for amusement. I don't suppose you have read The —— ——" Lady Sporran had, of course, but it was on her bedside table, not her drawing-room table, so she was able to say she hadn't, that life was so short that she devoted what time she had for reading "to Bergson and such writers, don't you know? —wonderful!" Then she made a sound something like gargling. "So—so—don't you know?" And Mrs. Moir looked up to her with awe thereafter, feeling a little guilty over the fluttering suspenses of Mr. —— and Miss ——, her two favourite writers of novelettes.

She found time hang very heavy. There had been

no peace conferences lately; there had been no synods of persons objecting to anything—giving scope for charges and recriminations. No conferences for the promulgating of anything had met in Glasgow, heralded by letters printed in a type like that of typewriting machines, and beginning Dear { Sir / Madam } signed, by "Hospitality Secretary," asking "whether you would care to have the opportunity of giving entertainment and a home to one of the delegates during the tenure of the conference." She felt herself a little out of touch in the new house, away out here on the Bearsden Road. Her husband had taken to golf, and though she did not agree that in her case Miss Tanner's words applied, she admitted that there was truth in one of that lady's outbreaks regarding men: "Look at them! They even make their wives move house so as to be near golf-links!" Later on she might apply the charge to Ebenezer. At present her memory could still hold on to the fact that it was she who had objected to the old home. In a dim way she recalled the proximity of the Infirmary, but she did not think now that that was the only reason for removal.

Sometimes, when brooding over Mr. Moir's cruelty to her, she wondered if perhaps she had not really been thinking of him when she suggested the removal, so as to get him into the country—for he liked country walks. Perhaps, thought she, she may even have had the golf-links in mind! Her brain was a blurred thing—like a cook's mirror hanging in the kitchen. But now that her husband was more like a lodger in the house, breakfasting there, but doing little else, always dining at his club, and treating her much as he would treat an idiot child, she had many resentments. She was in the condition of the great publicist who, seeing a reference

in the leader of a daily paper to some wrong which should be rectified on behalf of Stockingsoff the Siberian exile, wrote straightway to the editor: "In one of your letters to-day you casually mention the Stockingsoff case, as though taking it for granted that your readers have a knowledge of it. Unless it has already been mentioned in your columns, and escaped my notice, many of your readers must know nothing about it. I, for one, have not the faintest idea what the matter may be with Stockingsoff. Could you not publish further particulars, and then we would at once agitate on his behalf.—Yours, etc., CLAYMORE PIBROCH."

Barmaids had been abolished long ago, after much dispute, some maintaining that the bread was being taken out of the poor girls' mouths, others maintaining that it was a blot on the city that sweet women, noble women, should be in slavery behind a bar serving degrading alcohol to men who grew drunk before their eyes. No one dared suggest that if things were as bad as that the noble young women must be somewhat heartless to serve out the degrading stuff. Chivalry forbade such a suggestion. Mrs. Moir had had a small share—but a very small share—in that campaign. She had managed to have two letters in the newspapers on the theme. But that was an old story.

She felt, besides, frustrated in her own inner life. Martin had been married, she saw by the daily paper—and that also before the Sheriff. He had taken the trouble to note that fact in the announcement—"Before the Sheriff." It had been very humiliating for her. Enemies had sweetly condoled with her: "Was that your son's marriage I saw announced to-day?"

"Yes—my younger son."

"Not the artist?"

"Yes—a very well-known artist indeed. A very brilliant son."

"Oh, indeed! I have never heard of him. But then of course I am awfully out of it in these things. How interesting! But how you must feel him going off and being married before the Sheriff! Poor Mrs. Moir! You have my sympathy."

Or they would say: "Oh, dear Mrs. Moir! How tragic! I was so sorry for you—I said to a friend who asked me if I had heard of it: 'It can't be. Mrs. Moir will feel it so—she is so dignified herself, and there is such lack of dignity in being married before the Sheriff.' I really had to speak to you, just to sympathise."

All this irritated Mrs. Moir greatly. Others wanted to know who the girl was that he had married, and she could not tell them. She was put in an unpleasant position. The easiest way out was to shake her head over him, and adopt the air of pious regret, of—"Ah! Let us say nothing about him. Well—I suppose sons grow up and pass away, and have their own interests. John, of course, is a different boy. He is a plodder. He has written to say that he expects to stand for Parliament at the next election."

Her memory was not good enough to unravel all the tangled yarn, but she took it for granted that she had been grievously treated. Martin had never been filial. She was growing old—and feeling old. She was a woman who had suffered, but through all her suffering she had done her duty to her husband and her children, and if they turned against her she must bear that with fortitude.

It was a period of many inanities. Women of the Miss Tanner type, finding how far they could go with impunity, went all the way, and enjoyed life greatly and bitterly. They could not be argued with because

they were utterly brainless. They could not think two consecutive thoughts that were reasonably linked together. There were also to be found men who supported them in their bid for publicity—fine platform figures who loved the sound of their voices. "To bathe in the echo of my voice," said one in an unguarded moment, "gives one of the greatest thrills I know." At a local hall another held forth: "The time will come when our grandchildren will look upon us as savages" (cheers)—this apropos of a meeting to protest against an itinerating zoological exhibition; and in the next breath, "Woman has been spoken of as the last animal man can civilise. I hope it may be long ere she is civilised. Woman's savagery is one of her noblest, most splendid, greatest qualities" (cheers).

Mrs. Moir, of course, heard that speech, it being delivered at a meeting of protest. And she always attended meetings of inauguration and meetings of protest. She went home from it feeling mightily refreshed for her war with her husband, sure that she would again wear him down in the new attitude—his attitude of seclusion and aloofness and of determination not to lose his temper. Then her dear and earnest friend, Lady Sporran, suddenly astonished her circle by writing to the Press protesting against a statue of Justice which held aloft a sword. The sword was an indignity to her sex, she said. "The statue is of a woman, and we women do not wield the sword. Let us have the scales by all means. It has been shown to us that in logic women far transcend men. The scales are therefore right. But I know I speak for thousands of women when I say that the sword should be abolished. In these days of Universal Brotherhood it is a crying indignity to our sex.—Yours, etc., IMOGEN SPORRAN."

Mrs. Moir, because of being some way out of town,

was unable to be present when Lady Sporran gathered her friends round her to discuss the letters that they would write backing her up, letters to be hailed down upon the newspaper office. One might have imagined the country peopled wholly by idiots judging by the correspondence. Still, as John had said once to Martin, these things were a diversion to Mrs. Moir; and she wrote a letter also. She, like her friend Lady Sporran (so she wrote), was against militarism. As a bearer of the nation's sons she objected to the insult of the sword. It *was* an indignity. To bear sons for the nation was a great honour. This sword was an insult to women. They did not carry swords. They left it to brutish men to wield swords. How she reconciled the dignity of bearing sons with the brutishness of the sons, it is not necessary to inquire. Logic and reason have naught to do with these matters.

Converse between human beings on this planet (when one reasons and the other is unreasoning) is as vain as it may be between Martians and Earth-folk. The slang of the man in the street (or ware'us') could better say all that has to be said: *she had a grouch!* And the Grouch had not become less annoying to herself, or to those it affected, by treating her as if she was a reasoning human being, nor even by treating her as if she, unreasoning, had to be humoured. Her Grouch did not decrease when her letter failed to appear. But others had said things as idiotic as she, and the editor could surely not be expected to print them all. Besides, the original epistle of Lady Sporran was laughed into limbo the morning after Mrs. Moir posted hers, by the publication of a letter suggesting that every statue of Justice in Scotland should have the sword taken out of its hand and an umbrella put in the fist instead. A simple mechanical device, this correspondent suggested, might

doubtless be invented, by which the umbrellas could both come down and close up when it was not raining. ("This correspondence is closed.")

So Mrs. Moir had a new grievance. The voice of Woman that Bore the Nation's Sons had been ignored! There was a conspiracy, she conjectured, against her sex, and the League—I shall have to give it the name applied by the facetious John, having forgotten the correct style of it—the League of Embittered Christians (of which she was a member, and secretary of the Bearsden branch) agreed with her, and steamed and perspired over new idiocies when some of its adherents met of a Saturday in her drawing-room. She felt very happy, that day, imagining herself a society leader.

At last, occasion came for further publicity and good deeds and active interest in the country's welfare. Another Old Master was being offered to the nation. Some people wrote to the Press to say it was not—as the man who wanted to sell it declared it was—by Ballyrotti. Others wrote to say that it was. Others wrote to ask if this money that the man wanted for the picture could not be given to the poor instead. Others (whether facetiously or seriously, God knows) wrote to say if it was not a Ballyrotti it was better than a Ballyrotti, and the nation should have it. Reproductions of it appeared in the weeklies. The occasion came to Mrs. Moir. What is called A Symposium of Opinions on it was given in the religious and liter'y (as distinct from literary) weeklies with little inset photographs and autographs of the various men and women who were asked to express their opinions. The painting represented a nude woman. Mrs. Moir gave a new lease of life to the discussion, or more precisely, should we say, took a branch line from the discussion just when the editors began to feel that it was pretty nearly at its terminus,

and that something new to interest and agitate should be discovered.

Mr. Moir put down his morning paper, hit it furiously with clenched hand, so that the plates leapt, and along the table he said to his wife: "Do you know what you're doing?"

"Oh, is it in?" said she.

He studied her face with a terrible keenness.

"Listen!" he rasped, and taking up the paper, his voice quavering, his hand shaking, he read:

SIR,—Regarding the suggestion that the Nation should purchase the picture that some say is by Ballyrotti, and some say is not, might I draw attention to a point of view not yet touched upon—that is the indignity to woman. The morals of private collectors are at present their own affairs, though the day may not be far distant when such questions as I have to put before the public will be put before individuals by the State, and for the common good. It is criminal that in these days women should be inveigled into studios and made to strip themselves to be painted by men. I know there is a worse fate often in store for poor girls—and I do not blame the girls; they have chosen the lesser evil in offering themselves bravely to this indignity instead of to a worse. How their feet must ache going from studio door to studio door until a door is opened and a man eyes them in a way that is a profanation to women, and says "Come in." It is terrible to think of, and I know I speak for billions of women who bear the nation's sons—to say nothing of the daughters. It is time that the question of the Artist's Model should be looked into. I do not speak without a certain knowledge of these poor creatures who have been dragged to what artists call—oh irony!—the throne. I have recently been reading on Spanish Art. The artists themselves condemn themselves. There is a celebrated picture by a celebrated Spanish artist—Mariano Fortuny—called "Academicians Choosing a Model." In the notes appended to the

catalogue, which I have been studying, it is said that originally behind the academicians who pry at the poor sensitive child, was an ugly little woman—the child's mother—calmly knitting while she waited to see if the academicians would have her daughter. Even age, it will be observed, is mocked by men. The artist wiped that figure out, however, probably having sufficient shame left to be ashamed of *that*. I do not say that there are no respectable artists—far from it. We who bear the Nation's sons leave bigotry to men. All I wish to do is to put it before the hearts and consciences of those interested in the common good.—Yours, etc.,

RACHEL SINCLAIR MOIR.

Others might laugh at this sort of thing—though fools laugh at wise men much more readily than wise men at fools. But the frayed relative finds it hard to see the funny side. Mr. Moir put down the paper, all trembling.

"What do you think of yourself?" he said.

"Why, what *is* the matter with you?" asked Mrs. Moir.

"What did you do it for?"

"Is it not evident in my letter why I did it? For the common good."

"Common good!" he said. "You can put your mind at ease on that score. Common mockery! The writer of a letter like this should be pitied, I admit, but the majority are not built that way. You will be laughed at, woman. People will say: 'Well, Moir has a fool of a wife.'"

"Oh! It is yourself you are thinking of," she answered very stately.

"No, madam, not myself," said he. "But would your rubbish be printed at all if it were not for my name? That is what I mean when I mention myself."

"I'm well aware," said she, "that in marrying you I took your name, but I would have you remember the

middle one is Sinclair. The day may come when married women will use their own names."

"Pah!" he cried. "That is all you are fit for—to rail about nothing! And whose names will the children bear? It wouldn't matter what your name was, you would still have just the same brains. Your name! your name, you say! Sinclair! You know what Burns said of the Sinclairs of Colintrae—and all that ilk. 'Ye ken yon birkie ca'd a lord, wha struts and stares, an' a' that.' But don't divert me into petty bickering! What do you think of this silly composition?"

"I am not interested," she said, "in your opinion of my composition. People of better breeding and wider interests are not of your opinion regarding it; and they helped me to write it. Lady Sporran, and Mrs. Smith-Smythe and——"

"Oh they did, did they?" he replied. "Then why the devil didn't they all sign it to show how many of you had to get your heads together to write less than a quarter of a column's length of drivel?"

"Ebenezer!" she said, and drew herself erect. She rose.

"Sit down!" he said; and she sat down. "Rachel," he said, speaking very low, putting his elbow on the table and leaning forward, hand up, forefinger raised, "we have had two bad scenes in our married life—the one, you may remember, was before Martin's birth, when you were at Millport."

Mrs. Moir's eyes were very bright, her face very pale.

"I remember perfectly," she replied. "And Jessie Ray was there."

"Good!" said he. "You remember I took your petulance then very easily. You were with child. Women are sometimes strange when they are with child. It hurt me deeply that you should suggest that there was any-

thing whatever between Ebenezer Moir, your husband, and Jessie Ray, the grown woman; but I told myself it was your condition that made you——"

"You need not throw my sex at me," she said. "You might leave that out."

"Good!" he answered. "I will leave it out. It is not easy to leave it out, seeing it is the whole point of the matter, and that I would have a very different face for you if you had not been a woman, and the woman I——" he stuck. "I often wonder just how much that kind of delicacy of Martin's is due to your absurd jealousy. It might have had effect——"

"Modern Eugenists say——" she began.

"Listen to me," he interrupted. "Let us leave sex alone then. I take it that you did not believe me when I told you that Jessie Ray, when she came down there to paint her boats and her children on the seashore, had no idea that we were to be there. I take it, then, that it was your rational, everyday, and uninfluenced self that made you behave then the way you did. Good! I take it that now you are behaving the way you are doing not because you are a jealous and silly old woman —let me call you an individual, a sexless individual— a parent. I made one last attempt the other day to get you to be even human about Martin. I tried to tell you that he was going to be married, and then to go off to Spain with his wife. And when I tried to interest you in his trip, I told you that in his quaint way he had said: 'We are going to Spain, but much the way that a man with a hump goes out to post a letter instead of just for a walk to do him good. We are going with a definite object—to follow up the trail of Fortuny.' " He paused. "And you heard me," said he. "And you said: 'I am not interested.' By God!—you remembered the name, however—and you've been hunting it up. I see

my scheme of humouring you has been the worst scheme imaginable. You've got steadily worse. Don't rise! Sit still! I'm not finished."

Mrs. Moir was now quivering. He raised a hand again and shook a finger at her.

"My objections to Martin being an artist," he went on, "were the intense difficulties of the profession. Eight starve, one rubs along, one is successful out of ten; that was the way I looked at it. I was definitely set against it—for his sake. The other parent"—he discharged the words at her—"was set against it because It (he, she, or it!) was jealous, pettily hated Art, because of an erroneous idea that he, she, or its partner in the birth of the child——"

"I am afraid you are getting involved," she remarked icily, but her voice shook.

"——was unfaithful!" he finished.

"Oh, I never said that!" cried Mrs. Moir hastily. "I never said that!"

He looked at her intently, recognised that here was implicit admission of understanding of what he had been saying, and abruptly rose, walked to her end of the table, and she was horribly afraid for a moment; but all he did was to look at the morning paper afresh, find a place in it, and fold it so as to expose what he had looked for. He laid it down beside her.

"That may interest you," said he, and flattened the tip of a forefinger upon the place he had discovered.

"I cannot see without my glasses," she replied, her courage returned. "My eyes fail."

"And mine," he said. "We are both getting old." He stepped to the bell-pull and rang.

The maid was slow to respond, taking it for granted that this was merely the summons to clear away the breakfast things. He had looked, outwardly, calm, con-

sidering the lack of calm in his voice. But he took the bell-pull in hand again now, wrenched it violently up and down, and in withdrawing his hand dragged it out from the wall.

"Well!" she cried. "Even before the maids!" She had a stony heart.

The girl entered, agitated. Mr. Moir was on the hearth-rug with the bell-pull and an end of wire in his hand. His voice was now under control.

"Bring your mistress's glasses," he said.

"I have them here," said Mrs. Moir; they hung in a case at her belt, and she drew them forth.

"Suffering God!" he moaned, and the maid did not give notice on the spot as she had intended to do because of that more than peremptory summons, but retreated as if in awe.

Mrs. Moir wiped her spectacles carefully upon the tablecloth's edge, and, affixing them, looked at the paper.

An Exhibition of Clyde Etchings, Dry-points,
and Pen-and-Ink Drawings now open.
MARTIN MOIR. MARTIN MOIR.
On View
Rathbone Galleries, St. Vincent Place.

"You will observe, said Mr. Moir, when he saw that she had read, "that this is in the same paper as your idiotic letter. It will do him no harm; it will only be admired by a few old women like yourself, and a few sex perverts. That is not the point. The point is that in my blindness you have been getting rope, and you've hanged yourself. It is a long time since I ceased to object to him following this profession. I know now why you backed me up so long to do so. It seems impossible—but there it is. It was so dam dirty, so petty,

so small—that I never got down to it." He stepped back and looked at her. "No," he said; and again: "No! I have borne all your ways thinking they were just woman's ways. They've been thrawn woman's ways, however, and petty woman's ways. My mind takes hold on many things now, that I let slide before. When you objected to him drawing from the nude, you were objecting to Jessie Ray. When you came home from your Sunday's heretic-hunting to tell me you had seen him with a whore—and pitied the whore!" he exploded. "Do you know what you are going to do?" he went off on a new vein. "Do you know what you are going to do? You're going to write to Lady Sporran's Eugenist Society and resign your membership. I'm going to *boss* you the way you were never bossed, the way your idiots of women's-movement cronies say women have always been bossed. Well, I'm going to start—and thanks to them for the hint. Do you know what is wrong with your clique? We men are getting too far removed from the brute to please you! Oh, you don't know—you've got that excuse. You don't know why you're so depraved. You're coming with me to-day to the Rathbone Gallery, and you are going to tell your son you're sorry for having made such a fool of yourself, and to meet his wife. I only hope that he doesn't see the paper."

But he had seen it. He was walking up and down his studio saying not one word, walking to and fro with the morning's paper in his hand. There was a clutching at his heart. This knock (for of course Martin could not laugh at the letter; it was a "knock") came on top of two pleasing letters. If only it had come just before them—and had not smitten him so deeply! The letters were, one from Mrs. Harringway, now settled in Italy with her husband, old and retired and rheumaticky, a

letter full of herself, blent persiflage and wisdom, and one from John, saying: "I'm coming up to see your show. The old man wrote to me about it. Look for me on top of this—if I can get away."

These pleasant notes were eliminated by what his eyes fell upon in the morning paper. This, as he saw it, was a deliberate insult (or attempted insult) to Amy. He walked up and down clutching the paper, and suddenly clenching his fist and dashing the paper to the floor, he cried out with an exceedingly loud voice: "God damn her!" And the next moment, in a cold sweat, he seemed to see a face before him, seemed to see his mother shaking her head at him, was gazed upon by her saddened eyes. "Ah! You have cursed your mother!" she seemed to say. He stood still and shuddered, then sank down in one of the great chairs, and there was a terrified rat-tat-tatting at his outer door. He rose, and walking slowly over to it, drew the Moorish curtain, opened, and Amy dashed in, tossing down a parcel of stockings that she had been out purchasing.

"My dear, my dear!" she cried. "What is it? You screamed!"

"All right, dearest," he said. "All right! Nothing at all!"

Her glance went straight to the paper. Seeing her eyes upon it he bent to pick it up, and as he bent he staggered, the blood rushed so to his head. He was suddenly aware that he must keep calm—or something might happen. Throwing himself down again in the chair, he grabbed his pipe, put it between his teeth. Snap! He had bitten the pipe-stem through.

"All right!" he said. "All right!" He got up. "My dear, my dear," he said. "I don't know what I should do without you." And then: "What was that?" he asked.

"What?" she said, looking at him with intense anxiety, and running forward.

"That sound? Did you not hear a sound?"

Then his knees went from him and his head fell forward. She caught him. He slipped through her arms, saying: "Amy! Amy!"

CHAPTER X

"I WONDER why he does not come?" said Mr. Rathbone. "There have been one or two people in that I should have liked to introduce. He should be here."

He was speaking to Robert Wilson, who, back in Glasgow, had already been round the gallery.

"Yes," said Wilson, "many a picture is sold at a dinner-table. But here is his *Work,* anyhow! I say, Rathbone, he has a heap of pity, has Martin Moir, for such a young man. That blind matchseller——" he nodded his head in definite jerks and held up his right thumb. "Good! This is the real thing. This is painting—not brush-mountebanking. There are here no blurs of paint—Impression of the Eiffel Tower as seen by a Man who Fell Over. I'm glad you keep on exhibiting Work instead of holding Freak Shows. Hullo! This is his father—we were introduced a day or two ago—a jolly fine specimen of upright burgher."

Mr. and Mrs. Moir entered, and Mr. Moir handed his card of invitation to the Dana-Gibson young man at the door. They were passing Wilson and Rathbone, the entrance-way being but dimly-lit from overhead, and hung with a dark material. Mr. Moir stepped behind his wife, Rathbone drew back a curtain, and then came a recognition.

"Oh you, Mr. Wilson!" said Ebenezer. They shook hands. "Rachel—here is a friend of Martin's; Mr. Wilson, this is my wife." They bowed. "How are you?"

"Very well, thank you. I am just waiting for your son."

"You're expecting him then?" said Mrs. Moir. "He is not here?"

"He should be here," put in Rathbone, with a benevolent little nod.

The group delayed, with nothing to say. This big man who rightly attired (thought Wilson) might have posed for imperturbable Khan or law-giving Viking, had some thought in the back of his mind, it would appear, not easy to dismiss. He had no small change of talk ready. He cleared his throat.

"Have you been in, Mr. Wilson?" he asked, for something to say, indicating the inner room with a hand that seemed to usher the younger man before him. Wilson was not averse to closer observation of this interesting figure. They had been little more than introduced the other day, Mr. Moir having been on the point of departure from Martin's studio when Wilson arrived.

"I'll come in again with you," said Wilson, "though I have been in already."

With Mrs. Moir in advance, they entered the room where the Clyde etchings and dry-points were on view. Mrs. Moir felt ever so little nervous, out of her sphere. There were half a dozen people in the room, paying heed to nothing but the pictures, treading slow and soundless on the thick grey-blue carpet. She wondered vaguely how a carpet of such light hue was kept clean.

"Look at this matchseller," she heard Wilson say.

She looked at the pen-and-ink of the aged woman, match-boxes and laces on knees, peddling by the kerb.

"How terrible!" she said.

"Isn't it?" said Wilson. "It reminds me of 'La Vieille Haulmière.'"

"Of what?"

"Of Rodin's 'La Vieille Haulmière.'"

"I haven't seen it," she said, and turned away a little, with a protective hauteur of manner.

"It is too pitiable to be enjoyable," she mumbled. "I wish I honestly could enjoy it."

She spoke so quietly that Wilson, deferentially a step behind with Mr. Moir, caught the speech only partially.

"Pity? Yes, as you say—full of pity—implicit, more than explicit."

Mr. Moir gazed without words, and they moved on. To him it was all splendid. Here was his Glasgow—and Martin had seen it and put it down. "Orators," the etching of the people's parliament and debating place, the Glasgow Green, for some reason, made Ebenezer Moir's heart act more quickly for a beat or two. "Clutha Number One" passing under the Jamaica Bridge (Glasgow Bridge) affected him as Border Ballads affect Border men when sprung upon them unexpectedly. He glowed upon it—in the condition, inwardly, that would have made a Latin agitated as a windmill.

Rathbone had been talking with one of the viewers, and now stepped over to a table that stood at the far end of the central divan, took up a little cardboard box, and withdrawing therefrom a red paper seal, dabbed its gummed side upon a stamp sponge that lay beside the box, and affixed it upon the glass covering an etching that was next in their line of progress.

"Aha!" thought Mr. Moir, seeing that that made the third sale ticket. "I wonder how many copies he has limited these to."

Rathbone set down the box of tags, and Mr. Moir, smiling quietly to himself, lifted it, abstracted three tags, moistened them; and very solemnly, but his eyes bright, he affixed them on the corner of "Ingram Street." As he did so Mr. Rathbone came hurriedly to him.

"There is one of these laid aside for you, Mr. Moir,"

he said. "I have it in my room. Your son asked me to have it packed and send it——"

Ebenezer was unwontedly moved. He cleared his throat, and answered: "I was going to have one for myself and two to give away. No matter—I can give away the three easily."

"Not at all—if you—well, look round at any rate before you decide."

"That's all right. He knew I would like that, did he? I do. He never showed it to me in his studio. It's a surprise."

"It's got the street," said Mr. Rathbone.

"It reeks of it," said Mr. Moir. "It's just Ingram Street with its lorries and its people. I'm glad he's put in no motors. It is old Ingram Street he's thought of in doing it."

"It is worthy of Méryon," said Rathbone.

Ebenezer inclined his head. He knew not who Méryon was; therefore silence was golden, for his son's credit. But evidently to say that it was worthy of Méryon was high praise. Presumably Méryon was dead —otherwise such a comment was bad business in a dealer!

"Oh—that timber yard's there. You must send one of these, please, to my brother."

"Mr. John?" asked Rathbone. "Blythswood Square?"

"That's right."

"I have one laid aside to send him."

"You have! He'll like it—for the thing itself, and for the subject. He has an interest in timber."

Mr. Rathbone bowed. He had heard this sort of thing before—and indeed why not?—and went off to attend to a man who stood before the "Rivetters" evidently waiting for an opportunity to speak to him.

Wilson held out his hand to Mrs. Moir.

"I am just going. Allow me to congratulate you on him," he said.

She took his hand—thanked him, said it was very nice of him. Her husband pressed his hand warmly. Rathbone followed him to the door, pleased to have (in his horrible private word for him) so "useful" a man's appreciation of the exhibition; for Wilson chummed with the liter'y men of the press, as he called them, used to allow them to pump him for what to say about pictures and had a way of dropping terms of the studio, which they could use to show they *knew*. Still Wilson hated to go without seeing Martin. He stood in the low-toned corridor as if loathe to depart. The dealer stood beside him, and both had the appearance, to casual eyes, of wool-gathering, of looking out through the glass door with blind eyes. Wilson was thinking of the Moirs within.

"Superficially the law-giver—dispenser of justice; but it would break his heart to censure anybody. He would break up and die of a decline in civil war. Blood's thicker than water to that man. He's too highly civilised for that beautiful savage wife. What a grim tenacious tiger. What a demon of a God she must make her orisons to! Her eyes are like two clots of blood with a light in them. There's no Hanging Judge about him, for all his inches; no Hermiston about him. Martin Moir is like both—a bit of both in him. I see better now why I like him one day, and why another day he makes me tired. I'd like to paint his old man; but I couldn't paint his mater. I would grow satirical, call the picture 'mother-love' in a moment of cynicism. What flat flanks! What a slow, self-righteous motion! What deliberate hands! And eyes like a mad deer. Beautiful and dangerous. I wouldn't like to try to reason with her. She would grow quiet and calm and cold, and I should forget all

about reason—and paint a humped back on her in sheer desperate baulked rage.'' As he thus considered, with puckered eyes, Rathbone standing beside him, a movement behind caused them to glance over their shoulders. Mrs. Moir was looking out into the corridor, and as they turned she withdrew again. Wilson looked at Rathbone. Quoth he: ''What saith the Scriptures? 'The mother of Sisera looked out of a window and cried through the lattice, ''Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?'' ' Eh? Well, I must go.'' He nodded and was gone. When he did decide to go he departed with the abruptness of an arrow.

Mr. Moir began to be anxious. All who had been in the gallery when his wife and he arrived were now gone. A new set of three moved round.

''Rachel,'' he said, suddenly crossing to her, for she had sat down upon the divan, and bending over her, ''I don't like this. He should be here. I'm afraid something's wrong.''

She glanced up startled; she seemed suddenly old. ''Wrong? With him?''

''I don't like it. I am going to the studio. You wait here in case he comes—in case I miss him——''

''No, no—I'll come!'' She rose. ''Oh, Ben,'' she said, ''I'm sorry—I'm so sorry. I'll come—and be real nice.''

Rathbone had gone to his own room. An assistant stood at the door.

''We'll be back,'' said Mr. Moir to him.

''I'll tell Mr. Rathbone——''

''No, no, don't trouble him. Mr. Moir—Ebenezer Moir—will be back, if he asks.''

A taxi was passing, and Mr. Moir hailed it; they entered, and in two minutes were at their destination.

''Ben—I'm sorry. I was a foolish, jealous woman,'' said Rachel, as the chauffeur brought the cab gliding

to a stop and thrust the brake on, and Moir had the door-handle turned, ready to open, and merely gave her one glance of immense thanksgiving as he alighted and held his hand to help her to the pavement. He paid the driver, and they stepped across the pavement.

"My God! I stood in his way too," said he, thinking of Martin, not of her, for an inexplicable dread was heavy on him. "I hope there's nothing wrong."

"Do you feel—do you have a feeling that——"

"I don't know. I don't understand. It was almost as if I heard him scream."

She shuddered, as she shuddered when people talked of Planchette and of Table-turning. They walked down the entry, and stepped into the elevator.

"Top," said Mr. Moir, and it was about to start when a man running after them bawled sharply: "Stop that lift!"

Mr. Moir raised his head to face the rudeness and scowl upon it.

"I'll come back," said the boy.

"I'm a doctor——"

The boy slipped the cage down again and opened.

"Top," said the doctor.

Mrs. Moir looked at her husband; Mr. Moir gripped his beard and glared at the doctor, but it was a glare different from the one of a second ago. The elevator hummed up—was opened—and the doctor stepped smartly out.

"Which door, Moir?" he asked the boy.

"First, sir."

"My God!" said Mr. Moir, and moved after him. The doctor had not pressed the bell when the door was opened by Amy, and the sight of her face made Ebenezer drop his jaw briefly, and then clench it.

"You rang me up——" the doctor began.

"Come at once—it is my husband——" and Amy disappeared, not closing the door. The doctor turned to do so.

"Oh!" he ejaculated, seeing behind him his big companion of the elevator.

"I'm his father."

"Oh!" The doctor turned away hastily again. Amy was looking round for him, and seeing that he followed her she passed hastily from sight. Mr. Moir she did not see, nor Mrs. Moir; but they came quickly upon the doctor's heels. Mrs. Moir could hardly walk; she advanced in a series of pathetic steps, her knees failing with each forward motion, and being tautened only by a trembling determination. Her hands made fluttering gestures before her. They saw the white peaceful face of Martin among cushions.

"It's Death!" she cried—ran a few steps, and losing all the power of her legs, stumbled and sank down. Ebenezer encircled her with his arms, dragged her up, carried her to the divan at the near end of the studio, and laid her there in a half-reclining posture. With staring eyes and mouth open she gazed at the white face that dismissed everything else in the big room—for a space at least, but presently she must needs see the morning's paper lying in the middle of the floor. That sight ended her capacity to see aught else. She sat staring and unseeing, her expression utterly terrible, and she did not see the doctor bending over the body, feeling Martin's pulse, listening at his heart, turning back the eyelids. Only Mr. Moir, held motionless, saw these actions—and how the doctor now looked up at Amy asking some question, to which she replied. The doctor looked down again, and shook his head.

"No? No?" Amy broke out. "Can't I go with him? And this is the day the Show opens!" She knelt down.

"Martin, Martin! Doctors don't know. He's not—doctor, he's not—look! Martin, Martin, say you're sleeping! I'm listening close, Martin. He doesn't even whisper! Martin, do you hear, my dear? Can you not hear? Can you not hear? I'll see to it all."

Mrs. Moir tried to speak, and only made an incoherent bubble. Her bonnet had gone awry; her eyes started. Ebenezer, at that sound from her, turned and looked at her in horror. Amy turned also—and saw the mother. It was a terrible moment. Mrs. Moir, trembling, tried to come to her son, but her legs failed again. The doctor, perceiving the expression in Amy's eyes as she knelt there staring round at Martin's mother, felt that the latter must be got away.

"Take her out of the room," said he to Ebenezer. "Take her into the little ante-room."

They had not shut the outer door; they heard footsteps—and there was John looking in.

"What's wrong with her?" he asked, seeing his mother supported in Mr. Moir's arms.

"You, John!" said Mr. Moir. "It's Martin."

"Martin? Where? What's the matter?" He advanced to the studio, saw Amy kneeling beside the divan, her head now on Martin's chest, her hands on his shoulders. Martin's arm, hanging down, hand trailed on the floor, told all. Amy's back rose and fell in sobs. John backed out of the studio, giving strange cries in his chest.

The doctor plucked Mr. Moir's sleeve.

"I shall be back," he said.

"Yes, doctor. See, John, take your mother home. Do you understand? Rachel—Rachel—do you understand? John is going to take you home. You recognise him—here—this is John—he is going to take you home."

"Oh, my son—John! John is here! I have still one

boy left. John—yes—John. I am to go home with John. All right—I shall go home with John." She seemed dazed.

"Take her home and leave her there," said Mr. Moir. "I can't come; I must stay here. Thank God you came here."

If ever face had implored, Amy's face had implored. It had besought him to take Mrs. Moir away; it had shown recognition of who she was—and dread of her presence. And he respected the supplication to the full, did not merely carry Mrs. Moir from sight, out of the studio, but took her clear away. There was a constriction at his heart, a most terrible constriction as he saw her departing—saw her back disappearing—John aiding her.

The fat face of MacNaughten showed behind the curtain. He saluted.

"Is there anything I can do?" he asked.

"I don't think so," said Mr. Moir, "nobody can do anything, sir—nobody can do anything."

A crushed and awed look came on MacNaughten's face, and he saluted and retreated—but waited outside the door, beads of sweat dotting his troubled face.

Outside the door he tarried—and at the studio-door, holding breath (waiting for the doctor's return with a potion for Amy), Mr. Moir remained, while Amy knelt, within, beside the dead man, her hands on his shoulders, her head on his breast.

. . . . . .

Mr. Moir attended to the final scenes. There was an old family vault by the side of Saint Mungo Cathedral, in a part of the cemetery that had been closed by local law, or municipal law, or whatever be the name for it. Ebenezer had a great deal of coming and going, here and there, for signatures to permit of the re-opening of the

vault, signatures of people at the necropolis, of a Sheriff, of the Lord Provost. At last the grim trouble was over; and certainly everybody who helped him to unwind the red tape was full of gentleness. His lawyer was with him through all the arrangements, and after they were over Ebenezer looked at the lawyer thoughtfully, and said: "Man, Mr. McRitchie, I think I had better draw out a will. When one's sons begin to go it's a broad hint." The will was in favour of his wife, his son John, and his daughter-in-law.

Then he went home and found Rachel, as he told kind inquirers, "Wonderful. Yes, thank you, she's keeping up bravely. Thank you for your kindness." But for himself all was not well. From the funeral he returned complaining (as had Charlie MacDougall of the Winceys complained to Archie Templeman not long since) of feeling tired, simply had to sit down, thought he would go to bed. The damp, thawy air of the necropolis had percolated clean through him. He developed a high fever, was delirious, or rambling, spoke a deal of one called "Jessie," writhed and worried again through a difficult speech to Martin (evidently back in the little room in the "digs" in that street off New City Road), trying to clear up tangles and help things on for the best. "Man, man Martin, ye see your mother hadn't mentioned it." On the next afternoon he sat up in bed, coherent, and called: "Wife! Wife!"

Rachel Sinclair Moir was lying down in the next room beginning to wonder if, perhaps, in some little things, now and then, she had been hard. She hastened to him.

"Rachel woman," said he, "I'm bye with it. I forgive ye, woman. Gi' me a kiss, Rachel woman."

The exertion of trying to stretch to her as she bent over him, straining tears, was too much for him. He was absurdly weak.

"You'll not forget the insurance," he said. "The premiums are——" a crackling in his chest interrupted. He fell back and stretched out, and was at peace. From the expression that suffused his face anon one might rest content that the tangles in the yarn were all unravelled.

THE END

7 52